

Through Glass Darkly: Authenticity, History and Consumerism in Philip K. Dick's *The Man in the High Castle*

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<p>Tämä pro gradu -tutkielma tutkii autenttisuuden käsitettä postmodernissa kulutusyhteiskunnassa ja sen representaatioita Philip K. Dickin romaanissa <i>The Man in the High Castle</i>. Väitän, että postmodernismin kulttuurisen logiikan vuoksi todellista autenttisuutta on entistä vaikeampaa saavuttaa postmodernissa yhteiskunnassa.</p> <p>Kappaleessa 1 esittelee aiheen ja tutkii Yhdysvaltojen kulttuurista ja historiallista taustaa 1950- ja 1960-luvuilta ja sen vaikutuksia tieteiskirjallisuuden genreen. Valotan myös Philip K. Dickin taustaa, sekä kerron, kuinka <i>The Man in the High Castle</i> sijoittuu tähän kulttuuriseen kontekstiin.</p> <p>Teoriaosiossa tutkin autenttisuuden käsitettä postmodernilla aikakaudella. Ensiksi määrittelen postmodernismin, sekä analysoin, kuinka historia ja valta yhteiskunnassa ja kulttuurisessa tuotannossa käyttäytyvät postmodernismissa. Sen jälkeen käsittelen autenttisuutta kolmen keskeisen teoreetikon, Jean-Paul Sartren, Erich Frommin ja Charles Taylorin ajatusten kautta. Lopuksi tutkin, kuinka autenttisuus ilmenee kulutusyhteiskunnan kontekstissa.</p> <p>Analysiosiossa sovellan edellä mainittujen teoreetikoiden ajatuksia Dickin romaaniin. Väitän, että romaanin hahmot kärsivät postmodernismin kulttuurilogiikan vuoksi epäautenttisuudesta. Keskeinen esimerkki tästä romaanissa on amerikkalaisen kulttuurin esineellistäminen, joka ilmenee kopioitujen historiallisten esineiden muodossa. Tutkin myös romaanin epäautenttisuudelle antamia erilaisia muotoja, joista esimerkkejä ovat Joen fasistinen asenne elämään, sekä Tagomin henkinen ja eettinen kriisi. Kolmannessa osassa käsittelen romaanin metafiktiivisiä ominaisuuksia, ja yhdistän ne keskusteluun autenttisuudesta. Dickin tapa käsitellä tekstien suhteita viittaa siihen, että postmodernismissa todellisuus fragmentoituu useaan rinnakkaiseen tekstuaaliseen todellisuuteen. Lopullinen vastuu niiden tulkintaan ja autenttisuuden määrittelyyn jää tällöin yksilölle. Lopuksi viimeinen osio kokoaa tutkimuksen keskeiset loppupäätelmät.</p>				
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<p>This pro gradu thesis explores the notion of authenticity in the context of postmodern, consumerist society. By studying Philip K. Dick's novel <i>The Man in the High Castle</i>, I will show that because of the cultural logic of post-industrial capitalism, true authenticity has become increasingly difficult to attain in a postmodern society.</p> <p>Chapter 1 introduces the subject and studies the cultural and historical background of science fiction of the 1950s and 1960s USA. I elaborate on the author Philip K. Dick, and also show how <i>The Man in the High Castle</i> relates to this background.</p> <p>In the theory section I study the concept of authenticity in postmodern age. I start with the definition of postmodernism and consider how the notion of history and power in society function in that context. Then, I will consider the notion of authenticity through the ideas of philosophers Jean Paul Sartre, Erich Fromm and Charles Taylor. Thirdly, I study how consumerism affects the notion of authenticity in modern society.</p> <p>In the analysis section I will apply the theories of authenticity to Dick's novel. I argue that the characters of the novel suffer from a lack of authenticity because of the cultural logic of postmodernism. This manifests itself in the novel as the commodification of the American culture in the form of fake historical artifacts market. I also examine the different kinds of inauthenticity present in the text, examples of which are the inauthentic commercialism that undermines the American people, the fascist and masochistic outlook of life of Joe, and the spiritual and ethical crisis of Tagomi. In the third part of analysis I consider the metafictional qualities of the text and relate them to the issue of authenticity, which suggests that the nature of postmodern society results in a situation where the reality actually consists of several textual realities simultaneously. In the end, the responsibility of inscribing meaning to these texts is left to the individual, who must define the conditions of one's own authenticity. Finally, the conclusion section sums up these findings.</p>			
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1. Introduction

1.1 Aims and Structure

Authenticity is a concept that has been one of the key issues in philosophy since the time of Enlightenment. On one hand, it can be understood as individual project of self-fulfillment. We as individuals have the need to define our identity for ourselves, free of outside influences to be true to ourselves, in a sense. However, authenticity is also an issue which encompasses all of our society. We cannot exist in a bubble, detached from our surroundings. Therefore it follows that we must negotiate a meaningful identity in the context of society and other people.

In the era of postmodern capitalism this question has become increasingly problematic. The conditions of post-industrial capitalism have transformed the western world into a society of consumers, and because the market sphere of our society encompasses everything, we are given nearly unlimited freedom to choose whatever we desire for ourselves. While this freedom can be seen as positive, it also complicates the question of true authenticity. In this complex jungle, how can we be true to ourselves and find something truly worthwhile to construct our identities, and not become superficial or fake?

The writer Philip Kindred Dick (1928-1982) has considered this issue of authenticity in modern society in several of his novels. Emerging out of the post-war age of science fiction writing (often called the golden era), and taking the influences of the 1950s pulp fiction magazines, Dick wrote in a very original way that addresses many themes central to the concept of postmodernism: alienation, consumerism and the disintegration of identity to name a few. His novel, *The Man in the High Castle* (1962), is considered to be one of his best and most mature works. The novel tells an

alternate post-war history where the allied have lost the war, and the USA has been occupied by the forces of Japan and Germany. Thus, the story essentially reverses the political and economic position which the USA had in the beginning of the 1960s.

In this pro gradu thesis I will study the concept of authenticity from the point of view of Western philosophy and in the context of postmodern consumer society. I will argue that because of the cultural logic of consumerism, true authenticity has become increasingly difficult for an individual to attain in a postmodern society. Then, I will relate these ideas to the context of Dick's novel and show how *The Man in the High Castle* serves as an example of this process. I will start with relating the historical and political conditions of the 1950s America, and then move on to consider the connection of 19th century historical novel and its relation to science fiction genre. After that, I will elaborate on Dick's personal history and how *The Man in the High Castle* ties to this background. In Chapter 2, I will define the concept of postmodernism and study its nature in terms of three main issues relevant to my study: history, identity formation and power in society. Then, I will define the concept of authenticity and analyze its different perspectives, starting with the influential existential thinker Jean-Paul Sartre, and continuing with the psychoanalyst Erich Fromm and his thoughts on individual freedom. Finally, I move on to late 20th-century theorist Charles Taylor, who considers the issue of authenticity from a more pragmatic point of view with relation to surrounding society. In the third part of theory section I will consider the conditions of consumerism in postmodern society and the issue of authenticity in that context. In the analysis section I will study the concept of authenticity in *The Man in the High Castle* through the views of abovementioned cultural theorists. I argue that the characters in the novel suffer from a lack of authenticity because of the cultural production logic that is prevalent in their society. I will also study the different kinds of inauthenticities present in the text. Thirdly, I will examine the metafictional qualities of the text and relate them to the question of authenticity. Finally, the thesis will end with a conclusion.

1.2 1950s and the Birth of Consumerism

When the Second World War ended the United States found itself in a completely new situation. Much of central Europe lay in ruins and England, France, and especially Germany were all on the verge of complete infrastructural breakdown, the USA took up the role of financially aiding the project of rebuilding. This bode well for the American economy, as central Europe was in dire need of all manners of consumer goods, and partly because of this the American economy saw an unprecedented period of economic growth from late 1940s onwards.

However, the ending of the war also meant that wartime alliance had ended, and the political opposition between the USA and the Soviet Union grew ever deeper. In addition, the newly formed threat of full blown nuclear war surfaced in the 1950s with the Soviets creating their own nuclear bomb, which resulted in further entrenched positions, both in a military and a political sense on either side. What followed from this development was what we now call the Cold War period which is generally thought to have lasted up to 1989 when the Soviet Union finally collapsed. This period was mainly categorized with the abovementioned opposition, but also the fear of an all-out nuclear holocaust, which was thought to follow, should either side dare to use their ultimate weapon. Therefore, many of the conflicts that took place were so-called “proxy wars”, consisting of conflicts between secondary nations that belonged to the sphere of influence of the main counterparts, for instance, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. When we today consider the event, the actuality of the Cold War, we notice that it was much more than just a phrase or idiom which described the relations between polarities in world politics. To be more exact, Cold War was a metaphor:

The Cold War metaphor had a range of performative functions that proved essential for heads of state, politicians and policy advisors from the 1950s onwards. Most importantly, the term concealed the wide-ranging and violent extension of US global domination,

foregrounding images of tranquil stasis while simultaneously insisting, against all evidence, that stasis was the defining quality of the age. (Hammond 2)

This was a war that could not be fought openly in fear of mutually assured destruction, but it had to go underground and conceal itself from the common people. Therefore, to the people the most important one of its effects was *fear*, not knowing when the bombs would fall and possibly wipe out all humanity. Particularly in the USA, this fear was utilized in “all areas of national life, including literature, film, television, sporting events and the space race” (Hammond 5), where Soviet Communism was represented as “godless, murderous tyranny” (Hammond 5). By using such propaganda, the US administration could validate the brutal tactics in suppressing both foreign and domestic political opposition. While it could be said that things were worse behind the iron curtain, the American society of the Eisenhower era was close to a totalitarian police state, governed as much with violence as it was with fear. The evocation of the Cold War myth through mass media, effectively a manipulation of knowledge, played a significant part in this repression. Therefore, as Andrew Hammond sums it up, “[i]t is little wonder, [...] that dominant literary current was a postmodernism marked by narrative instability, ontological uncertainty, scathing self-reflexivity, and by a suspicion of all forms of metanarrative and historiography” (6).

These issues are also present in *Man in the High Castle*, as in the novel the American characters are detached from their own historical identity because of the Japanese occupation of the western coast of the USA. While the Japanese rule cannot be characterized as openly hostile, they have other means of oppressing the Americans. This is mainly done through the production of “authentic” historical artifacts, mass-produced by the American laborers catering to the wealthy Japanese. Thus, the history and culture of the Americans has been reappropriated and transformed into commodities by the process of industrial reproduction, detached from their original meaning. This in turn raises the question of the meaning of history as a constitutive element of an authentic

identity, and whether such an identity can be formed, if the artifacts, and history itself, is a “fake” reproduction.

The 1950s in America also marked a distinct detachment from older values. While the American ideal was built on the Protestant ethic, it had begun to break down with the introduction of consumer society. Daniel Bell comments on the subject that

[t]he basic American value pattern emphasized the virtue of achievement, defined as doing and making, and man displayed his character in the quality of his work. By the 1950s, the pattern of achievement remained, but it had been refined to emphasize status and taste. The culture was no longer concerned with how to work and achieve, but with how to spend and enjoy. (70)

Thus, the emphasis of identity formation had shifted. For the middle class, work and production was no longer the defining characteristic of identity. Instead, the emphasis was shifted to *consumption*. The old puritan roots faded away, auguring a new era of capitalism, free from its protestant moral roots. This in turn left “capitalism with no moral or transcendental ethic” (Bell 71). While the 1950s was the turning point in this development of new values and consumption culture, the process had actually started 30 years earlier in the 1920s, when mass consumption was first made possible by revolutions in technology. In addition to the introduction of electricity to ordinary households, there were three innovations that in particular became to be central to the development of consumerism: the assembly line, pioneered by Henry Ford and the automobile industry; the development of marketing as part of the business model for companies; and finally, installment buying, which enabled low income households access to higher tier consumer goods (Bell 66). However, it was in the 1950s that this development reached its culmination point, which resulted in a definite break from the older bourgeois values that had regulated the Western society. Bell states that “the ‘new capitalism’ [...] continued to demand Protestant ethic in the area of production – that is, in the realms of work – but

to stimulate a demand for pleasure and play in the area of consumption” (75). This break can also be seen in Dick’s novel, where the people are divided into two different classes: the Japanese are the hedonistic consumers, who consume goods in order to form an “original” identity, and the lower class Americans, the industrial workers that produce these goods.

1.3 From Historical Literature to Science Fiction

The relationship of past and present, the “truth” and fictiveness of history is a theme which countless fiction writers have explored. More specifically, the genre of historical novel in the 19th century was one of the central elements in the development of Western literary canon. It provided the means to delve on past events and images, not only telling stories of societies and individuals long gone, but also critically contemplating the decisions made and their consequences. The historical novel in the 19th century “provided figuration for the new [...] sense of history of the triumphant middle classes [...] as that class sought to project its own vision of its past and its future and to articulate its social and collective project in a temporal narrative distinct in form from those of earlier ‘subjects of history’ such as the feudal nobility” (Jameson 283). Thus, telling their own story from a distinctive point of view empowered middle-class readers and enabled them to identify with what they read.

During the second half of the 19th century, the rise of early industrial capitalism and the development of science also contributed to the rise of another literary genre, science fiction. As technology took great leaps forward, authors such as Jules Verne and later H. G. Wells not only imagined fantastic worlds, but also through their works commented on the society of their time. In the 1940s and 1950s, which is considered to be the “golden age” of science fiction, this role became more pronounced, as the political and cultural conditions of the Cold War and of the Eisenhower era effectively prohibited public discussion on a number of subjects. Thus, science fiction came to deal

with a number of issues that were feared by the public such as the threat of the Soviet invasion and the nuclear war. While it was often published in pulp magazines at the time, science fiction had the advantage of being a form of fantasy not situated in the ordinary world, but a fictive one, and thus it was (and is) able to talk about volatile literary subjects in terms of allegory and metaphor. Fredric Jameson mentions in his discussion of the subject that

science fiction as a genre entertains a dialectical and structural relationship with the historical novel – a relationship of kinship and inversion all at once, of opposition and homology. [...] [I]f the historical novel ‘corresponded’ to the emergence of historicity, of a history in its strong modern post-eighteenth-century sense, science fiction equally corresponds to the waning or the blockage of that historicity, and, particularly in our own time [...], to its crisis and paralysis. (284)

Particularly George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), regarded nowadays as a classic dystopian novel, addressed the issue of totalitarian control by means of surveillance and manipulation of public knowledge. In the world of the novel “war has become a rationale for official policy, a catch-all justification for domestic measures and – most importantly – a means of dissociating the day-to-day lives of the citizens from participation of control” (Seed 68). Orwell’s creation of a parallel history of sorts was a clever method of contrasting the fictional totalitarian state in order to talk about the real one, and it also inspired other writers to imitate his style.

Such texts are known as the genre of alternate history, a sub-genre of science fiction which, as the name implies, focuses on narratives about worlds where history has taken some alternative path. Essentially, they answer the question “what if this had happened differently?” Thus, alternate history fiction provides as the means to contemplate and reflect upon the things that have happened in a different light. Karen Hellekson describes the implications of this question more specifically: “Alternate history asks questions about time, linearity, determinism, and the implicit link between

past and present. It considers the individual's role in making history, and foregrounds the constructiveness and narrativity of history" (Hellekson, 453). Therefore, by asking the "what if" question, alternate histories also raise questions concerning the nature of history itself. While the historical facts and evidence are underlying any particular narrative based on past events, it is ultimately "[the] active mind [of the reader] that seeks to make meaning from historical artifacts" (454).

Thus, the notion of causality as the defining element in historiography has become under question throughout our culture, both in popular and academic sense. The Canadian theorist Linda Hutcheon has written extensively on the connection of historicity and postmodern literature. She explains that

In the postmodern novel the conventions of both fiction and historiography are simultaneously used and abused, installed and subverted, asserted and denied. And the double (literary/historical) nature of this intertextual parody is one of the major means by which this paradoxical (and defining) nature of postmodernism is textually inscribed. (5)

Hutcheon argues that the problematic nature that history takes in postmodern culture is one of the defining aspects of the literary culture of the postmodern era from 1950s onwards. She explains that the objective position of history among cultural sciences has come to be contested, and particularly among literature there have been several notable postmodern writers that have explored the possibilities of alterate histories and multiple worlds, intertextuality and metafiction, perhaps most notable of them being the prolific E. L. Doctorow, and others whom Hutcheon mentions are Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Thomas Pynchon and Tom Wolfe. These themes are also very much present in Philip K. Dick's works, particularly in *The Man in the High Castle*, which I will discuss in the next section.

1.4 Dick and *The Man in the High Castle*

Philip Kindred Dick (1928-1982) was born in California. Growing up in the first part of the 20th century, Dick was greatly influenced by the pulp and science fiction magazines of the 1940s and 1950s, and he also started his career by getting his short stories published in them. While he is probably best known through the film adaptations of his novels and short stories, for instance Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982) and Paul Verhoeven's *Total Recall* (1990), these are just the tip of the iceberg of his literary production. He published countless short stories, novellas and some 24 full length novels between 1955 and 1982. Whereas the writers mentioned in the previous paragraph (from Doctorow to Pynchon) are universally acclaimed and canonized in modern American literature, Dick has remained the favorite of mainly science fiction enthusiasts. While he never really succeeded commercially, his stories are still widely read and he has had considerable influence in the science fiction genre and the American popular culture in general because of his very distinctive, imaginative style.

Many of Dick's novels feature some puzzle or philosophical problem that the protagonist(s) face, such as reversed time, religious crisis or some kind of dissolution of the objective world. Thus Dick uses his texts as a kind of laboratories, imagining worlds where philosophical problems have become reality. This is also true for *The Man in the High Castle* (1962) (later abbreviated as *MHC*), one of his most acclaimed works, which won him the HUGO award in 1963 (Mann 119). In *MHC* history has taken a different turn onwards from the Second World War, which the axis nations have won. Subsequently, the world has been divided between Japan and Germany: the pacific, eastern Asia and the western coast up to the middle west of the United States are Japan's territory; Similarly, Europe, Africa, the Middle East and the eastern coast of the United States are Germany's.

The story is for the most part situated in San Francisco, which is now under Japanese rule. In the beginning we are introduced to multiple characters of different social positions: Robert Childan, an antique store owner; Frank Frink, a Jewish craftsman who has managed to elude the Nazis and now lives under a false identity in San Francisco; Mr. Tagomi, a Japanese official and a collector of American antiquities and Juliana Frink, Frank's ex-wife and a judo instructor. While the novel does not have a main character per se, these four characters occupy the center of the plot.

As the story progresses, Childan comes to face the reality of his chosen trade of antique business as he discovers that some of the historical artifacts that he sells are actually fakes. Subsequently Frank Frink, previously a laborer producing these fakes starts his own business with his associate, Ed McCarthy. Their goal is to start making jewelry of original design. Juliana meets an enigmatic trucker Joe who is of Italian origin and fought in the war on the axis side. Together they become interested in the story of *Grasshopper Lies Heavy*, a text featuring in Dick's novel, and end up in a search for its author, Hawthorne Abendsen, who allegedly resides in the heavily fortified "high castle" mentioned in the novel's title. As the book has been banned by the Nazis in the eastern coast of the United States and Europe, Abendsen is a wanted man. Towards the end of the book these separate plot strands become intertwined. Childan starts selling Frink's jewelry in his store, and gives one piece as a gift to Tagomi, who recognizes something different in it. The Jewelry gives him a glimpse of another San Francisco, where the Americans are not controlled by the Japanese, a world which is possibly our own. Juliana and Joe decide to meet with Abendsen in order to ask about his book, but during the trip Joe is revealed to be an assassin sent to neutralize the author. Juliana ends up cutting his jugular vein with a straight razor and leaves Joe to bleed out as she goes to meet with Abendsen alone. Her objective is to find out why Abendsen wrote the book, a question that they together proceed to ask I Ching, the oracle, as he has used it in writing the book. The final answer suggests that actually the world they inhabit is no more "real" than the world of *Grasshopper*.

While *MHC* certainly talks about historicity, there are also other issues that are central to it. Particularly the commercialism of the American culture is a phenomenon that interested Dick. In fact, His style has often been considered kitschy and “trash”, which may have been a personal decision, taking in to account his roots and inspiration of the 1950s era science fiction magazines. As Dick himself comments on this stylistic choice in a letter to Stanislaw Lem:

Mr. Lem, there is no culture here in California, only trash. And we who grew up here and live here and write here have nothing else to include as elements in our work; you can see this in *ON THE ROAD* [...] This is a world of hamburger stands and Disneyland and freeways and gas stations and studios where they will take the excess fat off you [...] If God manifested Himself to use [sic] here He would do so in the form of a spraycan advertised on TV. (qtd. in Simpson, 369)

In his discussion of Dick’s novel, *The Martian Time-Slip* (1964), he argues that the use of trash in the novel “anticipates postmodern trash aesthetics” (366), and that the trash is a metaphor for, and criticism of, the rampant consumer culture prevalent in the American west coast already in the sixties. What this shows is that Dick found this throw-away culture wasteful and felt that this result of consumerism was ubiquitous in California. As I will show, this attitude can also be found in *MHC*, published two years earlier.

Another topic that can be found in *MHC* is the issue of art and its connection to the popular commercial culture. Andrew Lison has written about the position of art in the novel. In his article “‘The very idea of place’: Form, Contingency, and Adornian Volition in *The Man in the High Castle*”, he applies Theodor Adorno’s ideas to Dick’s representations of the historical artifact market and the production of original art, as opposed to imitated one. In addition, he also studies the presence of contingency in the text, as the novel was constructed using the I Ching. By studying Dick’s novel

alongside John Cage's compositions on his record *Imagined Landscapes* (since both were constructed by using I Ching as a tool), Lison states that

despite their radically different *métiers*, [they] nevertheless share, we are not simply presented with an example of Adorno's ideas but can glimpse a shift in their conceptualization away from the aesthetic expression of horror as such and towards an incorporation of the aleatory as a formal quality. By reading *The Man in the High Castle* alongside Adorno we can see how Dick's novel not only corresponds to and illuminates, but also extends, these developments in aesthetic theory in a changing, postwar historical context. (47)

In sum, Dick's works in general deal with the themes of historicity, commercialism and the concept of art in culture and society. Moreover, as I will show, particularly *MHC* considers the position of these issues from the point of view of the individual living in a postmodern, commercial society. Next, I will move on to explore the theory behind these issues.

2. Authenticity in the Postmodern Age

In this section I will show how the writing of history is seen in the context of postmodern science and society. I will discuss the meaning of the term postmodern and its connection to the world of post-industrial capitalism in three different themes. Firstly, I will relate its connection to history and historiography; secondly, I will consider how the postmodern society has changed the way we understand individual identity, and finally, I will examine how power applied through production in society. After, that I will relate these questions to the problem of authenticity and discuss how individuals construct their identity with regards to history and cultural knowledge. Finally, I will consider the concept of consumerism. I will show how the issue of authenticity is complicated by the cultural logic of capitalism, and how consumerism is used as a method of controlling the masses through the act of consumption.

2.1 The Postmodern

The postmodern, as the term suggests, is related to earlier (high) modernism. In a way, it can be considered as an ideological continuation from modernism, but also simultaneously as a break from it. Whereas high modernism is considered as the culmination of the enlightenment project that started with the 16th century philosophers, postmodernism breaks from this tradition. Fredric Jameson states that “this break is most often related to notions of the waning or extinction of the hundred-year-old modern movement (or to its ideological or aesthetic repudiation)” (53). However, at the same time Jameson explicitly states that the whole idea of historical periodization becomes complicated, and for that reason the concept of postmodernism is difficult to define in relation to time or a certain “style”, and thus he refers to it as the “cultural dominant” of the late 20th century (53-54). This cultural

dominant is a complex notion that covers philosophy, art, industrial production and popular culture that is the Western world and its society. While Jameson has a point in avoiding chronological or stylistic definition, I will use the term postmodern age when referring to the Western society from 1950s onwards. Also, many of the theorists that I will discuss use different terms when addressing different elements of postmodernism, and thus I will simplify the issue by using terms “postmodernism”, “modern society”, and “post-industrial society” interchangeably.

The post-modern age also has been called the age of the individual. This is true in the sense that, when compared to earlier societal orders, starting with feudalism and going through to early industrial capitalism of the 18th century, these ways of constructing a society were based on dividing the people in groups in different ways. For example, in feudalism, the social classes were determined by the heritage of the individual: a son of a blacksmith would most likely grow up to become a blacksmith himself, and similarly the son of a noble would inherit his father’s title. As opposed to this, the post-industrial capitalism that has been the dominant form of societal order in the second half of the 20th century has enabled the individual to transcend his heritage and social position in a new way and make his/her own destiny through education and rise in the social order. Daniel Bell states on the subject that “in the modern consciousness, there is not a common being but a *self*, and the concern of this self is with its individual *authenticity*, its unique, irreducible character free of contrivances and conventions, the masks and hypocrisies, the distortions of the self by society” (19; emphasis original). This obsession with the individual authenticity has created a new social order that is based on the individual and his needs, which, Bell argues, “makes the motive and not the action – the impact on the self, not the moral consequence to society – the source of ethical and aesthetic judgments” (19). Thus, the individual has become the central unit of society in modernity in way that has not been possible before.

In this thesis I will concentrate on two main issues that constitute the basis of my study and which I will further deliberate on in the following subsections. These are, firstly, the notion of

historical time and historiography and the breakdown of metanarratives, and secondly, the issue of power in the context of postmodern society.

2.1.1 History and Postmodernism

The coming of the postmodern age affected the way in which history is thought. The fall of metanarratives and the loss of center(s) in culture have led to a situation, where all of the previously central thoughts and ideologies have lost their privileged position as “right” or “truth”, and today culture is understood as polyphony of voices and differing views and opinions. The cultural theorist Francois Lyotard describes this crisis as “incredulity towards metanarratives” (xxiv). What he means by this is that the postmodern age is characterized by an all-encompassing doubt towards knowledge in general because of the ontological and epistemological crisis in the first half of the 20th century brought on by developments in science, for instance in physics the invention of the quantum theory, and in math the chaos theory. Moreover, in art and philosophy the crisis of the quest of enlightenment, which culminated in the elitist culture that is modernism, breaks down in the postmodern era. Also the horrors of the two World Wars showed in detail the brutality that mankind is capable of inflicting upon itself, and thus further contributed to the crisis of the human condition from 1940s onwards.

Similarly, the scientific discipline of historiography and its methods that are used in research and writing have come to be questioned on a fundamental level during the 20th century. While earlier it was understood as a logical, disinterested and objective practice that was based on a careful research of recorded facts in order to show causality and continuity in the events that have led to the present moment, nowadays this view is largely contested by many cultural theorists. Keith Jenkins, who has written extensively about the nature of history as science, postulates that “history is one of a series of

discourses about the world. These discourses do not create the world [...] but they do appropriate it and give it all the meaning it has” (5). Moreover, “[h]istory [...] is thus in a different category to that which it discourses about, that is, history and past are different things” (5). This means that, although written history bases itself on the *facts* of the past, the selection of relevant information, processing and analyzing it to create a logical progression of events and eventually writing it down, all this constitutes “an active, willful working on materials. It is a creation, a fiction, in the full sense of the term” (Poster 76).

However, this does not mean that historical writing, be it plain “academic” history or a historical fiction, has lost its meaning altogether. Rather, it allows the same facts to be viewed in a multitude of ways, providing many different narratives and viewpoints. Therefore, no one history can be thought as a totalizing *truth* about the past. This allows certain underprivileged groups of society (women, gays, immigrants or African-Americans, for instance) to have an outlet to tell their own history and to identify with it. Therefore it is clear that historical writing has the ability to mould the identity of the reader who either identifies or not with the text he/she reads. Jenkins says that “[i]t is here, in usages and meanings, that history becomes so problematic; when the question ‘what is history?’ becomes [...] ‘who is history for?’” (26).

It can be said that the traditional, objective view of history as a science does not hold in the context of the postmodern world. Even if the historian himself does not realize the fallacy of his/her own (supposed) objectivity, it is imperative that the reader take this into account. For Michel Foucault, the writing of history is “a form of knowledge and a form of power at the same time; put differently, it is a means of controlling and domesticating the past in the form of knowing it” (Poster 75). What he wants to point out is the fallacy of a project striving for a unified, domesticated view of the past, as if all things that have been constitute a neat and comprehensible chronology. In fact, it can be dangerous, because this knowledge can be used and abused by those who control society to

further their own agenda. In the next section I will elaborate on this problematic connection history and power in society.

2.1.2 Power and Cultural Production

As I have already discussed, the issue of historiography is not as simple as it would at first seem to be. It has to be understood as being flawed, as an objective all-inclusive account of the past is impossible to attain. Therefore it follows that *any* history we read is, as any other text, produced in a complex social and historical context, and is by definition biased in some sense. It is here that the issues power in society and the production of cultural information come into play. If oppression is understood as the denial of authenticity for parts of the people, then the production of cultural goods such as history becomes a process, where the production of information and disinformation, and more importantly, the *omitting* of information can be used to this end. Scott Wilson discusses this issue in his book *Cultural Materialism*. In it, by paraphrasing Stephen Greenblatt, he explains that

Theoretical assumptions of Greenblatt's practice are, on the one hand, an Austinian assumption belief that words do things, the assumption that words and texts are not passive, transparent representations of things and events, but are material things in themselves that are active in the world to which they are tied by their specific historical mode of existence, and on the other hand, a faintly contradictory assumption that, after all words do represent people and things and that it is regrettable that language, in its opacity, obscures them. (57)

What Wilson is saying here is that history must be understood as any other text object; in its own historical and social context. The opacity of language is unavoidable, but it can also be

deliberately used to obscure meaning, and thus, as a method of exercising power in society. Particularly Michel Foucault's thoughts and theories have influenced extensively the way we today understand this process, and how power is justified and reinforced through the manipulation of knowledge. According to Foucault, "knowledge and power are deeply connected" and that this creates "a new pattern of social control that is embedded in practice at many points in the social field and that it constitutes a set of structures whose agency is at once everyone and no one" (Poster 78).

He draws extensively from the works of Friedrich Nietzsche and particularly his views on the genealogy of knowledge. Nietzsche was opposed to the traditional model of western philosophy which sought the origin of knowledge, or the ideal of humanity. He claimed no origin can be found, or that any ideal ever existed (Foucault 7). Rather, Nietzsche saw that knowledge in general was invented, and that it has no origin (7). Foucault explains this position that knowledge "is simply the outcome of the interplay, the encounter, the junction, *the struggle*, and the compromise between the instincts" (8; emphasis added). In other words, knowledge is not an inherent characteristic of human, as the classical Greek philosophy emphasized, and nor is it God given; from the perspective of Nietzsche it was the result of an evolutionary struggle between men. Although Foucault states that some of Nietzsche's thoughts on the nature of knowledge can be seen as contradictory, they nevertheless provide "a model for a historical analysis of truth" (13), which is based on Nietzsche's premise that "there is not a nature of knowledge, an essence of knowledge, of the universal conditions of knowledge; rather, that knowledge is always historical and circumstantial result of conditions outside the domain of knowledge" (13). By this he means that when- or wherever cultural knowledge is produced, the notion of power comes into play. Power relations are something which is at work in every unit of society, be it large or small in size. In a hegemonic society, they have become internalized in the individual to such an extent that he/she becomes a self-regulating subject of that hegemonic power.

Following Foucault, we have to consider the issue of how this power is realized and reinforced in the production of cultural goods. By this I refer to both material, industrially produced consumer goods, and the production of more intellectual material, namely academic knowledge and “art”. I refer to the latter in quotation marks because in a postmodern understanding of the term; one cannot any longer draw a clearly defined line between high art as such and mass-produced art. The cultural critic Walter Benjamin analyzes this problematic dichotomy in his famous work, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. Benjamin argues that “What shrinks in an age where the work of art can be reproduced by technological means is its aura” (7). While Benjamin writes about the issue in the context of early 20th century, his ideas have been highly influential since, and the post-war popular culture is filled with examples of his ideas, perhaps most notably in the works of Andy Warhol. His painting of the Campbell soup can is the perfect example of how a mass-produced consumer object is recreated into a work of popular art. This example also clearly demonstrates the implicit connection between commodity and art: the line between the two has become blurred, because an ordinary object can be recreated as art. Similarly, an art object can be reduced into a commodity, removed from its original meaning and context:

Reproductive technology, we might say in general terms, removes the thing reproduced from the realm of tradition. In making many copies of the reproduction, it substitutes for its unique incidence, a multiplicity of incidences. And in allowing the reproduction to come closer to whatever situation the person apprehending it is in, it actualizes what is reproduced. (Benjamin 7)

Thus, it can be said that the process of industrial production distances the thing that is produced from reality. It becomes a simulacrum of the original which is not only a copy, indistinguishable from the original, but also on a symbolic level it stops referring to the sign that the original represents. The French cultural theorist Jean Baudrillard describes this process as a simulation that “starts from the utopia of [the] principle of equivalence, from the radical negation of

the sign as value, from the sign as reversion and death sentence of every reference” (11; emphasis original). This differs from the concept mere representation, because the “simulation envelops the whole edifice of representation as itself a simulacrum (11). Therefore, a process of mechanical reproduction transcends the idea of representation by not actually referring to the original at all, but creating a new tier above the division of sign and the signified. He continues that “[w]hen the real is no longer what it used to be, nostalgia assumes its full meaning. There is proliferation of myths of origin and signs of reality; of second-hand truth, objectivity and authenticity” (12). Thus, according to Baudrillard, the sign no longer refers to anything “real” because “everything is already dead”, but instead points directly to other signs, a kind of a metareality that he names “the hyperreal” (11-12). In terms of authenticity this means that the connection to anything original has been severed, and that authenticity itself manifests only as a simulation, a desired symbol among other symbols in the field of the hyperreal, which constitutes any and all cultural objects.

In other words, the process of commodification is inescapable in postmodern society, and the production of cultural knowledge adopts the logic of industrial production. It can be argued that neither art nor science can escape this logic, but are both reliant upon the processes of commodification and simulation, and upon the consuming habits of the general public. However, the view of critics such as Theodor Adorno or Baudrillard has also become questioned in the latter half of the 19th century. Whereas they saw the field of cultural production divided into homogenous “mass culture” and true art, or “avant-garde”, Jim Collins argues that this view is outdated and that popular culture as a whole includes many different facets and styles which are not only different from each other, but also often contradictory (Collins 12). According to Collins, “[s]elf-definition becomes contingent upon a self-enclosure within one’s medium, which is itself dependent on a negative definition: we are not the ‘power structure’ because of our art” (14). What he means by this is that the authenticity of a particular text is not contingent on the artist being a part of the “avant-garde”. Many artists that work in the field of popular culture realize, and comment on, the homogenizing

nature of corporate-driven mass culture, and steer away from it, identifying rather with the negation of that value.

To sum up, the interplay of cultural production and power is a complex one. On one hand, in order to uphold the status quo, power has to be implemented through the production of consumed objects, both material and immaterial. However, rather than banning certain products or ideas while favoring others, it is most effectively accomplished through the logic of consumerism itself. By giving the people the freedom to choose for themselves from the wide field that is the modern consumer market, they facilitate themselves into the system, and become the self-regulating subjects that Foucault imagined. However, a part of today's popular culture is also the mentality of different niche-cultures that consumers identify with, and a part of that identity is the need for self-definition, which directly conflicts with the idea of consumers as a homogenous mass of people. Whether this constitutes as true individualism or "authentic" identity can be questioned. Next, I will discuss the nature of this authenticity from a philosophical standpoint.

2.2 The Problem of Authenticity

Defining the concept authenticity is difficult because of its elusive, subjective nature. While the task of discovering our authentic selves can be understood as a solitary project, it cannot be done in isolation from our surroundings. As members of society, we are inevitably subjected to all manner of outside influences such as the prevalent moral code, different kinds of rules of society, culture, history, laws and even our upbringing among others. In other words, the process of socialization for its part moulds us to be the individual we are. Therefore authenticity must be considered in a wider context, taking into account the aforementioned surrounding conditions.

In this section I will discuss the background of the issue of authenticity in philosophy, starting with the key existential philosopher, Jean-Paul Sartre. After that I will bring Sartre's ideas into a more contemporary context through the psychoanalyst Erich Fromm, who has analyzed the issue of freedom in human condition in modern society. Finally, I will consider the question authenticity from the point of view of society through the ideas of Charles Taylor.

2.2.1 Sartre's Existentialism

Influenced by Heidegger's phenomenology, Jean Paul Sartre constructed an analytical model for the human condition in his works. His theory is based on the premise of absolute freedom, which means that an individual is unconditionally free, despite of the conditions he/she is subjected to. Thus, the concept of freedom is inseparable from the human condition, or as Sartre puts it, "[t]o be free is to be condemned to be free" (Sartre 129). In his magnum opus, *Being and Nothingness* (1943), Sartre analyzes the human condition according to these polar opposites. Being, he argues, "is what it is" (629), meaning that it is pure ontology that exists in a non-relational way. Its relation to the surrounding world is what constitutes the human condition, and the problems of identification rise from this. Furthermore, he divides being into two ways of being that relate to the world at large, and to the knowledge of it: being-in-itself, and being-for-itself. The first of these is defined as "non-conscious being", which means that "it is a plenitude and strictly speaking we can say of it only that it is" (629). Thus, being-in-itself is a non-questioning form of existence, where the subject takes his current role as granted. The being-for-itself is the opposite of the previous one, a "nihilation of the being-in-itself" (629), meaning a mode in which the subject has counteracted the in-itself by a process of negation. This process is what Sartre holds crucial in the attaining true authenticity, and he demonstrates this with an example of a waiter in a café:

He applies himself to chaining his movements as if they were mechanisms, the one regulating the other; his gestures and even his voice seem to be mechanisms; he gives himself the quickness and pitiless rapidity of things. He is playing, he is amusing himself. But what is he playing? We need not watch long before we can explain it: he is playing at being a waiter in a café. (Sartre 59).

This example demonstrates the instrumental way we act in the world. The waiter takes his role as being-in-itself, which results in a puppet-like behavior in the eyes of the observer, as he fails to overcome his social role through the process of negation. The waiter's role in this example is what Sartre calls a person's *facticity*. These are the facts about us that define our relationship to the world at large. These include, but are not limited to, such things as biology, possessions, profession, social standing and the social roles that we assume in different situations. He suggests that we must coordinate our existence in relation to these facticities, simultaneously realizing them, but also transcending them, so that we are not ultimately defined by them. Inability to do so results in inauthentic mode of being that he calls bad faith. To quote Sartre,

[t]he basic concept which is thus engendered, utilizes the double property of the human being, who is at once a facticity and a transcendence, These two aspects of human reality are and ought to be capable of a valid coordination. But bad faith does not wish either to coordinate them nor to surmount them in a synthesis. Bad faith seeks to affirm their identity while preserving their differences. It must affirm facticity as being transcendence and transcendence as being facticity, in such a way that at the instant when a person apprehends the one, he can find himself abruptly faced with the other. (Sartre 56)

This of course presupposes that, not only are we aware of the facts in question, but also that we are willing to redefine our relationship with the outside world, which in turn leads to a new kind of insight of individual being in general. Thus, Sartre argues that it is possible to achieve transcendence over

our facticities, and to realize our own individual meaning in life, or in other words an authentic mode of living, but this requires a continuous effort of negation and deliberation. This Sartre calls transcendence, which is defined “as that inner and realizing negation which reveals the in-itself while determining the being for-itself” (180).

Thus, Sartre places a great deal of weight on defining an authentic being through its negation. While the importance of doing so may seem self-evident, the truth is that bad faith is ubiquitous. The reason for this is, apparent in the previous example of the waiter shows, that we do not want to accept our freedom, but instead choose inauthentic being because we fear that which is unknown to us. Often it is easier to resort to self-deception and lie, because of the daunting responsibility that being-for-itself presupposes of us. In other words, being in bad faith is a way lying to oneself in order to avoid taking responsibility, because “[t]he one who practices bad faith is hiding a displeasing truth or presenting as truth a pleasing untruth. [...] Only what changes everything is the fact that in bad faith it is from myself that I am hiding the truth” (Sartre 49).

Sartre also outlines a third mode of being that is the outside perspective called being-for-others. It is defined through the third perspective and the facticity that posits us as beings in the world, the Body. He explains that “[i]t is the fact that my denial that I am the Other is *not* sufficient to make the Other exist, *but* that the Other must simultaneously with my *own negation* deny that he is me. This is the facticity of being-for-others” (301; emphasis original). To elaborate, the Other is the mirror that we reflect ourselves while being in the world. Though the Body we situate the Other, and consequently, ourselves into the social space of the world at large. In this sense, we are always unavoidably connected to the outside world through our gaze of other Bodies, and their gaze of ourselves. Therefore the issue of recognition is important here, much like in the previously mentioned example of the waiter, his behavior is presented to us through our gaze of his actions. The Other is important as a reflection of ourselves, and through understanding *their* condition(s) and facticities we can transcend our own.

To sum up, Sartre's theories have since been widely read and they have had considerable effect in art, literature and in modern philosophy of the human condition. However, his existentialist point of view has also received critique in the second half of the 20th century as being too centered on the individual, and not taking into account the complex social context of modern society. While Sartre's point of view places considerable emphasis on the individual's responsibility to negate and transcend his needs and wants in order to achieve authentic existence, he does not fully take into consideration the origin(s) of these facticities. The fact is that the consumer society we live in is based on creating these conditions as a part of the socialization process in order to assimilate the individual into the system of the consumer society. This in turn creates a contradiction, as the individual cannot escape his surroundings, much like he cannot ultimately escape himself as a human being. Thus, one cannot exist in a vacuum, but has to relate himself to surrounding society in a meaningful way, an issue that Charles Taylor further deliberates on. However, first I will elaborate on the issue of freedom in modern society through the ideas of Erich Fromm.

2.2.2 Freedom and the Modernity

It is a common understanding that the development starting with the project of Enlightenment, proceeding to the inauguration of the industrial society in the 1800s, and finally, the birth of the modern society in the first half of the 19th century, resulted in a new kind of a view of the nature of the human condition. Because of these economic and ideological changes, individual can now be considered to be more in control of his own destiny. This is true when we consider the aspects of life on a social level: for instance, one can educate himself as he sees fit and set himself the goals to pursue in his life. However, the freedom that post-industrial society provides also comes at a price, because on one hand individual "becomes more independent, self-reliant and critical", but he also

“becomes more isolated, alone and afraid” (Fromm 90). Thus, the freedom comes at a price. The newfound economic independence in the 20th century has also distanced the individual from the protestant values such as delayed gratification, humility and temperance, and thus in a sense this newfound freedom is freedom from the values the previous historical period. Erich Fromm further deliberates that while “we are proud that in his conduct of life man has become free from external authorities, which tell him what to do and what not to do” (91), at the same time we “neglect the role of the anonymous authorities like public opinion and ‘common sense’” (91). Therefore it can be said that while we have become more free from outside influences, we have at the same time in our culture cultivated a sense of self-censorship, an inner mechanism that controls our behavior in society. According to Fromm, the reason for this is that “we are fascinated by the growth of freedom from powers *outside* ourselves and are blinded to the fact of *inner* restraints, compulsions and fears, which tend to undermine the meaning of victories freedom has won against its traditional enemies” (91; emphasis original).

Following Fromm’s thoughts, the issues of alienation, compulsion and fear are the primary things that delimit individual’s freedom to realize himself as an autonomous individual. He also suggests that these are connected with anxiety and selfishness that are an integral part of a modern individual:

[S]elfishness is rooted in the lack of affirmation and love for the real self, that is, for the whole complete human being with all his potentialities. The “self” in the interest of which modern man acts is the *social* self, a self which is essentially constituted by the role the individual is supposed to play and which in reality is merely the subjective disguise for the objective social function of man in society. (Fromm 100; emphasis original)

Fromm makes a clear distinction between the “true” self which exists in a non-relational way, or as an absolute plenitude (using Sartre’s term), and the social self, which is defined by one’s relation to

the other. The result is a contradiction that divides psyche of the modern individual. On one hand, one still strives to define oneself in a non-relational way by transcending one's social self, but on the other they cannot escape the fact that modern culture does not recognize any other definition save for the social self. Thus, the culture of modernity has come to define the individual in a completely instrumental way. Ultimately one's existence in modern society is contingent on the gaze of the Other. Moreover, this instrumental approach in turn results in a feeling of meaninglessness in the individual, as he buys or sells commodities to satisfy the condition of constructing a social self. Fromm states that as a logical conclusion, "[m]an does not only sell commodities, he sells himself and feels himself to be a commodity" (103).

This alienation from the true Self, and the feeling of isolation from other human beings, which we have established is the outcome of the conditions of the modern age, also results in a feeling of powerlessness over his own life in a modern individual. Fromm says that the modern human being "must try to escape from freedom altogether unless [he] can progress from negative to positive freedom" (116). The two main methods for this escape are "the submission to a leader, [...] and the compulsive conforming" to the culture at large in modern society (116). What both of these have in common is that in both instances the individual surrenders the responsibility for his actions to something which is beyond the individual. Thus, he is released from the burden of freedom that is the ultimate reason behind his anxiety and fear. Fromm further deliberates that in the case of submission to outside authority, the individual replaces the primary bonds that have been lost with secondary ones, which offer escape from the meaninglessness of one's existence (134). These secondary bonds he refers to as "masochistic", because it is about "complete mastery over another person, [...] to become His God, to do with him as one pleases" (135). Thus, relinquishing one's autonomy to a leader, or to an idea, is a method of escaping the burden of freedom and responsibility, a prime example of which is the birth of fascism in Europe in the first half of the 20th century.

The second escape, one that is most often taken by the average person, is the one of conformism. Basically this means that the person replaces his own judgment of the world at large to that of the general opinion of the masses. Fromm explains that “the individual ceases to be himself; he adopts entirely the kind of personality offered to him by cultural patterns; and he therefore becomes exactly as all others are and as they expect him to be” (160). This release of the need to have a clearly defined, unique personality frees the individual of the burden of freedom and responsibility because “[t]he discrepancy between the ‘I’ and the world disappears and with it the conscious fear of aloneness and powerlessness” (160). The result is a kind of a tradeoff: the modern individual, paradoxically, signs off his individual nature and personality in favor of one that is constructed by the culture and public opinion. Next, I will consider how one can construct a meaningful relationship with himself, and consequently, with surrounding world in the context of the modern society without resorting to giving up his individual freedom.

2.2.3 Constructing a Meaningful Identity

In his book *Ethics of Authenticity* (1991) Charles Taylor states that “[t]he agent seeking significance in life, trying to define him- or herself meaningfully, has to exist in a horizon of important questions” (40). By this he means that much our western culture that promotes an authentic way of life and identity is actually “*in opposition* to the demands of society, which *shut out* history and bonds of solidarity” (40; emphasis original). Taylor goes on to refer to these consumerist forms of self-realization as “narcissistic”, meaning that they only promote such an ideal that centers on the individual and his wants and needs, with little or no regards to the society around him. He further explains that

[o]nly if I exist in a world in which history, or the demands of the nature, or the needs of my fellow human beings, or the duties of citizenship, or the call of God, or something else of this order *matters* crucially, can I define an identity for myself that is not trivial. Authenticity is not the enemy demands that emanate from beyond the self, it supposes such demands. (40-41; emphasis original)

Thus it follows that with regards to this project of authenticity, it is important for the individual realize this difference. Often it is easier to simply “go with the flow”, or give into the narcissistic culture that consumerism promotes, rather than be critical of one’s surrounding culture. As Taylor also mentions, much of the methods offered in the market sphere that promote ways of improving oneself in one way or another in return for a fee actually do no such thing, as they only center on the individual, with no regard for the “demands that emanate from beyond the self” (41). Given that we live in the age of individualism, it is easy to understand this as a moral code, according to which “no one has a right to criticize another’s values” (Taylor 45). However, this has the unfortunate capacity of a pitfall for absolute relativism, which would in turn result in a society that promotes no values, and in an individual that has no regard for either the fellow human or for common good.

Nevertheless, we live in a society based on individualism, and some kind of a middle ground must be negotiated. In this crux of the problem the notion of authenticity becomes a key issue. While the individual’s right to self-fulfillment must be recognized, there also has to be a way of linking them to the society at large. What I mean by this is that they must be recognized as the macro level. Taylor states on the matter that “our identities are formed in dialogue with others, in agreement or struggle with their recognition of us” (45-46). Thus, while our self-fulfillment is an issue which we should have control over as free members of society, the value thereof must be validated by others, otherwise it is worthless. Taylor further deliberates that

[m]y discovering my identity doesn't mean that I work out in isolation but that I negotiate it through dialogue, partly overt, partly internalized, with others. That is why the development of an ideal of inwardly generated identity gives a new and crucial importance to recognition. My own identity crucially depends on my dialogical relations with others. (47-48)

On the other hand, it is also possible that the need for recognition from outside the self can become an end in itself. Heather McNeil and Bonnie Mac ponder this issue in their article "Constructions of Authenticity". They state that according to the thoughts of Rousseau and Herder,

the desire to be considered worthy by others — pride, or even vanity — can become so overwhelming that people begin to lose contact with who they are as individuals. In this way, worldly pressures and external influences undermine the ability of an individual to focus on developing and sustaining knowledge of him- or herself. (McNeil & Mak 28)

Moreover, they also consider the thoughts of Martin Heidegger, who stated that "authenticity is inseparable from the world. Authenticity itself is bound up in the same discursive framework as the exploration of self. It is thus contingent upon the particular social and historical circumstances of each person who seeks it, and indeed contingent upon life itself" (29). Therefore authenticity has to be understood as non-essential entity, wrapped up in the context of outside society and its value discourse.

So it follows that both of these conditions must be met. Individual must have the freedom to realize themselves as they wish to be in the cultural context in which they operate, but they also need the recognition of other free agents of society to validate their identities. Then, and only then, can an authentic mode of existence be realized. However, this presupposes that, firstly, they have access to all the relevant cultural information such as history, social position, their position in the market sphere (in other words what Sartre calls facticities), and secondly, that the condition(s) of their recognition

are met, or in other words, that they have their own voice in society. In addition, they must not fall into the pit of pride and vanity, as that can also be an obstacle in the individual's quest for self-discovery.

2.3 Consumerism

As I have shown in the previous section, the existentialist philosophical tradition places much emphasis on the individual in the project of attaining meaningful identity. Sartre in particular approaches the problem of authenticity from the point of view of the Self, where the responsibility (or lack thereof) of attaining an authentic mode of existence in life rested wholly on the individual. One can say this is ultimately the case, but it is not a very productive way of approaching the problem. As opposed to this, Charles Taylor ties this problem to the conditions of modern society, placing emphasis on the fact that any meaningful authenticity must exist in relation to the outside world. Given that we do live in a post-industrial society where everything is connected, therefore the problem will have to be situated in that context, the complexities of which Sartre could not have predicted. Therefore I will next consider the conditions of the post-industrial consumer society that we live in, and then relate the issue of authenticity to its features.

2.3.1 Birth of Consumerism

In order to discuss what constitutes an authentic identity in a consumerist society, we must first consider the history of the relation between material objects and identity formation. Naturally, the most important precedent of the rise of modern materialist culture was the industrial revolution. In

the latter half of the 19th century, Karl Marx argued that in a pre-industrial society, “labor constitutes man’s most important activity. [...] Through work man creates his world, and as a consequence he creates himself”, and that “through creative work, man achieves self-realization” (Israel 37). However, the system of industrial capitalism radically changes the relation between worker and the end product of his labor. According to Marx, the private ownership of production machinery results in a situation, where “human labor is changed into a commodity on par with all other commodities. For that reason, labor is subordinated to the market-laws of capitalist society” (Israel 41). Thus, Marx claims that in such a situation a proletarian cannot become a self-realizing and self-defining individual. While this may have been true to some extent, times have since considerably changed. During the beginning of the 20th century, the dominion of the market sphere over the rest of the western society had become ever more evident, and with the introduction of mass media after the Second World War, the system which we today refer to as modern consumerism was established (Ackerman 119).

While in the early industrial capitalism the production of goods was the central defining aspect for an individual worker, the emphasis has since shifted towards the consumption of material goods. Neva R. Goodwin defines the consumerism as a system, where “[the] individual identity [is related] to consumption, so that our judgments of ourselves and of other people relate to the “lifestyle” that is created by consumption activities” (3). He also quotes Raymond Benton who argues that, from an ideological point of view, “consumerism [refers to] the acceptance of consumption as the way to self-development, self-realization, and self-fulfillment” (3). This means that an individual’s need for self-definition and self-realization which Sartre and Marx talked about, has been re-harnessed in a new way. While the individual participants attempt to define their own identity through consumption, in the process they also reproduce the values and ethics of the consumerist system.

2.3.2 Consumerism and Control

The concept of self-realization that Goodwin and Benton address is one which is projected outwards to other people. It is exclusive, which means that individuals want to be original and unlike others, and because of this they purchase products in order to differentiate themselves from other people. Therefore, it follows that people do not buy products just because of their material characteristics or usage, but also because of their *symbolic* value (Goodwin 3). For example, a New York Yankees fan purchases a Yankee baseball cap precisely because it identifies him with a certain community and projects certain values to others. Thus, acquiring consumer goods has become a method of building an identity, where consumers adopt products as well as symbols, ideas, and even experiences like pieces of a quilt to their personal identities.

The sociologist Jörn Lamla discusses this process of shopping for identity on a more general level. He asserts that

mass-consumer's disposition to shop for identity [is] [...] a necessary condition of modern capitalism. Consumers must acquire the ability to imagine and daydream in order to act and participate as well-integrated citizens of the market society. These autonomous, imaginative hedonists, experts in manipulating their own desires [...] anchor some mode of pleasure-seeking in modern life, which is continuously fueled and disappointed by the market sphere. (174)

This means that consumers are not only driven by their need for self-definition, but also by a desire to experience emotional and aesthetic gratification. However, such experiences have to be temporary because of the dialectical nature of consumerism. The fashion industry is a case in point: perhaps the most desired characteristic of a certain (fashionable) piece of clothing is its newness and

novelty, which will however wear off as more and more people purchase the said attire. Hence, consumers are eventually disappointed by the market, and in time they will buy a new product, again to gratify their senses and fulfill the need for self-definition. Ultimately, as Lamla and Goodwin both argue, such a system is dependent on the participation of consumers. Without Lamla's "well-integrated citizens of the market society" (174) who have internalized the consumerist logic of identity formation, the system could not function.

This logic can also be considered a tool of control, and in order to control the public, one must be able to control its habits of consumption, because "[t]he 'consumer spirit' [...] rebels against regulation. A society of consumers is resentful of all legal restrictions imposed on freedom of choice, of any delegitimation of potential objects of consumption, and manifests its resentment by widespread support willingly offered to most 'deregulatory' measures" (Bauman 319). This idea is also supported by Foucault, who understood power to be more as an active, productive force rather than a repressive one (Wilson 64). In other words, it is more effective to encourage consumption of certain kinds of products or information rather than trying to ban the unwanted ones, because the regulatory action would go against the grain of the logic of control that Bauman mentions. The ban would instill interest in the said object, actually *creating* market value for it rather than discouraging public interest. Thus, directly restricting consumer's freedom of choice is not an effective way of control. It is actually more effective to control people indirectly through the manipulation of information. Baudrillard notes that the concept of panopticon that Jeremy Bentham envisioned in the 1700s and Orwell imagined through the idea of the TV eye, is no longer valid (Baudrillard 53). He describes that this is because of

[a] turnabout of affairs by which it becomes impossible to locate an instance of the model, of the power of the gaze, of the medium itself, since *you* are always already on the other side. No more subject, focal point, center or periphery: but pure flexion or circular inflection. No more violence or surveillance: only "information", secret virulence, chain

reaction, slow implosion and simulacra of spaces where the real-effect again comes into play. (53-54; emphasis original)

What he means by this is that the consumer becomes a self-regulating subject that is controlled by the consuming impulses which he experiences as a constructing, positive force. In a way, the one who gazes and the subject of that gaze is the both the individual itself, watching regulating itself. In effect these polar opposites that Baudrillard mentions are done away by the fact that they no longer connect to anything beyond the hyperreal. He further explains that “[e]verywhere, in whatever political, biological, psychological, media domain, where the distinction between poles can no longer be maintained, one enters into simulation, and hence, into absolute manipulation – not passivity, but the *non-distinction of active and passive*” (Baudrillard 57-58; emphasis original).

Thus, consumerism does away with previous models of social control through surveillance and restriction. These become in fact redundant, as the individual no longer requires “active” control because the control is enacted on a deeper personal level. By assimilating the values and practices of the consumerist logic, one does not only become a self-regulating subject, but also experiences gratification through consumption, and acceptance through encountering the Other, who reifies one’s consumption practices by giving feedback on one’s social self. Thus, the encounter with the other rewards one’s consumption practices through the gaze of others. This, it can be said, is the ultimate form of control, because it is not enacted through restriction, but through gratification and reinforcement of the ideas and feelings already present in the individual. With that said, the issue of attaining authentic mode of being becomes more complicated, as the self cannot be considered in isolation, but is always reliant on the disposition and feedback of other consumers.

2.3.3 Authenticity and Consumerism

While the previous definitions of individual behavior in a consumer society have used terms such as self-definition and self-realization, they are used in the context of consumerist logic, as this section will show. Examined from a viewpoint of existential philosophy and authentic being, their meaning must be interpreted in a different way. If we apply Sartre's premises for an authentic mode of being to Lamla's definition of "autonomous, imaginative hedonists" (174), if not transcended through the process of interpretation and negation, the consumerist logic of identity formation must be understood as just another facticity in a person's life. On the surface one may project an image of autonomy and originality to others, but from an existential point of view this is not true authenticity, because the consumer is not able to transcend the limitations of his/her life on an ideological level. They are still defining their identity through acts of consumption, and hence are exactly like everyone else. Although such behavior may define an individual as original and authentic inside the system, such a person is no closer to attaining true authentic mode of being, and is in bad faith.

It seems that in the modern system of consumerism these two different definitions of authentic identity have become mixed with each other. Ultimately, authenticity in a consumer society is as much about constructing an individual identity as it is maintaining a certain social position and projecting a certain kind of image of self to others. As opposed to that, the existential notion of authenticity is an inward, philosophical, or even a religious project of attaining true self-realization, and as such it is by definition an anti-consumerist philosophy. Nevertheless, even that can be utilized in a consumerist sense. Lamla states that "even anti-consumerist movements can be utilized as a cultural resource for creation of new markets" (178). Thus, because of this integration of philosophies to the market sphere, the notion of authenticity itself has become a commodity, and it has become

ever more difficult for individuals to realize their true nature, which is unconditional freedom and responsibility.

While this may be the case, defining identity through the consumption of material products has become a considerable part of identity formation in a modern society. We as consumers are free to consume and add anything and everything to our identity as we choose, and this freedom “comes from the fact that the axial principle of modern culture is the expression of and remaking of the ‘self’ in order to achieve self-realization and self-fulfillment” (Bell 13). In effect, person’s identity and freedom have been completely absorbed by the market sphere, where individual desires are expressed through consumption. Little, if anything, remains from the connection to the philosophical ideas that defined true authenticity. In other words, the practice of consumption has “become a compulsive, irrational aim, because it is an end in itself, with little or no relation to the use of, or pleasure in the things bought and consumed” (Fromm qtd. in Israel 158). I would also like to point out here that consumption does not simply refer to the practice of acquiring material products, as all goods, be they material or immaterial (referring to knowledge in general, for instance history) are also “consumed” in a sense. Like the aforementioned example of shopping that Lamla used, also cultural knowledge in general can be understood in a similar fashion: we as consumers of this knowledge take what parts we wish and add to our identity. In addition, Fromm’s idea of the modern individual’s need to escape the unconditional freedom seems a paradoxical, yet logical conclusion of the human condition in a consumerist context. The practice of consumption offers a convenient escape from the unbearable burden of responsibility, and thus, from freedom itself.

However, the question remains whether consumerism can offer any kind of true authenticity for an individual. By this I mean a social order in which the market sphere encompasses everything in society, and the individual is “free” and left to his own devices to satisfy his/her needs as a consumer, whatever they may be. To phrase the question differently using Taylor’s terminology, is it

possible for an individual to find *something* to relate to in a meaningful way? That is a difficult question to answer because of its subjective nature.

If we consider this in relation to the conditions that Charles Taylor purports, the issue of recognition becomes the key concept. For true authenticity, the individual has to be able to find a cause that is meaningful for him/her on a personal level, but also for the cause to be worthwhile in the eyes of peers as well. Moreover, one has to be conscious and understanding of the cultural information and factors that are relevant to the issue at hand, in other words, to be aware of the facticities relevant to the issue, but at the same time be in a position to be able to transcend these facticities, so as to not fall in a pit of bad faith. Moreover, we have to consider Fromm's conditions of freedom and the social self. When combined, we come to a kind of a catch 22 situation, as the modern individual has the tendency to act according to the needs of the social self, which is constituted by interaction with others in the marketplace, but this in itself does not equal authentic being. Fromm's difference between the self and the social self can be understood as a facticity like any other, as one that has to be transcended through negation. Still, Taylor's demand for recognition remains, and that can only be satisfied through interaction with others. Therefore he calls for coordinated political action, one which aims "to reverse the drift that market and bureaucratic state engender towards greater atomism and instrumentalism" (120). This task seems daunting, and requires

many-leveled struggle, intellectual, spiritual and political, in which the debates in the public arena interlink with those in a host of institutional settings, like hospitals and schools, [...] and where these disputes in turn both feed and are fed by the various attempts to define in theoretical terms the place of technology, and the demands of authenticity, and beyond that, the shape of human life and its relation to cosmos. (Taylor 120)

Taylor calls for a public debate that must emerge at grass roots level, uniting the people that suffer from a lack of authenticity wherever they work, and especially in institutions such as schools that are tasked with transferring cultural information to the next generation. Daniel Bell also aptly comments on the problem that the multi-national capitalism and the freedom it offers also make possible a new kind of “self-conscious maturity” (281), the basis of which can be created by

conjoining three actions: the reaffirmation of our past, for only if we know the inheritance from the past can we become aware of the obligation to posterity; recognition of the limits of resources and priority of *needs*, individual and social, over unlimited appetite and wants; and agreement upon a conception of equity which gives all persons a sense of fairness and inclusion in the society. (281-283; emphasis original)

Thus, both Taylor and Bell agree that the solution for the problem of the inauthenticity in a consumer society is the re-evaluation of the human condition therein, and political action to overcome it. Their proposed solutions in a way echo the ideal of the autonomous human from the project of enlightenment, presumed long dead by some philosophers and cultural theorists. What we therefore need is a new social contract that re-imagines both the role and responsibility of the individual, and of the society, which must provide the conditions necessary for meaningful political action, namely those of education, recognition and equal freedom. We as individuals must seize the freedom we are given, and avoiding pitfalls of false gods of the market, take action to better ourselves and the whole of humanity. Ultimately, what we must understand is that the marketplace is not a force of nature, as some neo-liberals would like to see it as, but a human invention, and as such it can, and should be, controlled to serve our own ends and not the other way round.

3. Authenticity, History and Consumerism in *The Man in the High Castle*

In this chapter I will apply the theories that I have presented to *The Man in the High Castle*. In section 3.1 I will show that the novel foregrounds the lack of authenticity that the characters suffer from because of the production logic that is prevalent in their society. Secondly, I will discuss the ways in which this oppression is established and implemented through the production of material and immaterial goods in the novel. Thirdly, I will examine the rise of a new American consciousness in the novel that is symbolized by the jewelry that Frank Frink produces.

In section 3.2 I will concentrate on the metafictional qualities present in the text, particularly the novel within the novel, the *Grasshopper Lies Heavy*. I will examine the meanings that the *Grasshopper* has to the characters and how the reading of alternate history is seen among the different groups present in *MHC*. Secondly, I will elaborate on the ethical implications that the characters face in the course of the story, and how this question affects their identity. Finally, I will show that Dick's novel is not only a metafictional one, but that it raises questions about our own world and its fictiveness, which is an unavoidable outcome of the act of narrativising reality through writing.

3.1 Authenticity and the Market

In this section I will examine the conditions that the main characters live in the world of *MHC*. Firstly, I will show that they live in a consumerist social system where identity is primarily constituted through the marketplace. Secondly, I will show that the interplay of production and consumption is divided along the lines of national identity, namely the division of the upper class consumers (the Japanese masters) and the lower class American workers. Thirdly, I will examine the historical artifact business

in more detail, and analyze how value is defined in this system. Finally, I will show how the Americans have been detached from their authentic roots because of this market logic, and how they demand for recognition in the latter half of the novel.

3.1.1 Conditions of Oppression

This section examines the general conditions present in the society. As I already mentioned, most of the story takes place in the western coast of the United States in the city of San Francisco. From the beginning of the story it is clear that this is Japanese territory. The following excerpt from the novel details the outlook of central S.A. It paints a picture not too dissimilar from the real city in the 1960s:

The radio of the pedecab blared out popular tunes, competing with the radios of the other cabs, cars and buses. Childan did not hear; he was used to it. Nor he did take notice of the enormous neon signs with their permanent ads obliterating the front of virtually every large building. (Dick 27)

Here the antique store owner Robert Childan travels by pedecab (a bicycle-driven cab) through the center of the city. As we can plainly see, the society of *MHC* is infused by consumerism. The neon billboard ads suggest that the American society under Japanese rule is a capitalist one, where consumerism is ubiquitous. Moreover, Childan's chosen method of transport furthermore exemplifies the racial relations: "[i]t was pleasurable to be pedaled by another human being, to feel the straining muscles of the *chink* transmitted in the form of regular vibrations. [...] To be pulled instead of having to pull. And – to have, even if for a moment, higher place" (Dick 28). Childan's attitude towards the *chink*, as he derogatorily refers to the Chinese worker, reveals his dislike of the Asians in general. If the Japanese are the ruling portion of the people, the Chinese are the lowest

portion, even below the Americans. The superiority he feels reflects his own position in the eyes of the Japanese whom he clearly resents. Nevertheless, because of his chosen profession he is utterly dependent on them as customers in his antique store.

Unlike the Japanese, the Germans do not seem to have the enthusiasm in American memorabilia. Given that San Francisco is not in their territory, they have a less direct presence in the story, but nevertheless, they play the role of the main antagonists. It can be said that on the U.S. west coast they are both feared and respected, and their global position of power is something that the Americans look up to. Early in *MHC* Childan thinks to himself that

what the Nazis have which we lack is – nobility. Admire them for their love of efficiency ... but it's the dream that stirs one. [...] Now, the Japanese on the other hand. I know them pretty well; I do business with them, after all, day in and day out. They are – let's face it – Orientals. Yellow people. We whites have to bow to them because they hold the power. But we watch Germany; we see what can be done where whites have conquered, and it's quite different. (Dick 30)

This excerpt shows that Childan's attitude towards the Germans is a divided one. On one hand he seems to admire them for their nobility and efficiency, but there is also a hint of fear. Whereas he sees the Japanese as his masters, the Germans in a way represent all what the white people have achieved, and Childan clearly feels a sense of kinship with the Germans. However, his thoughts also tell us that in the course of conquering Europe and Africa, the Germans have not only drained the Mediterranean to be used as farmland, but they have also eradicated the people of Africa in what is called "the Final Solution" (Dick 29-30). Thus, Childan has a certain respect towards "the Reich" (as the German regime is referred to in the novel), but he also rightly fears them, and understands that from their perspective, he and his counterparts would be just another conquest in the eyes of the Germans.

The relationship between Mr. Childan and the Japanese becomes clearer when, further in the story, he visits the Kasouras, a young Japanese couple with whom he wishes to do business. The meeting represents a new opportunity for a man like him: “these new people, of the rising generation, who do not remember the days before the war or even the war itself – they were the hope of the world. [...] It will end, [...] [t]he very idea of place. Not governed and governing, but people (Dick 12-13). Thus, they represent the second generation of Japanese, who are more accepting of the foreign culture they live in, as even their first names (Paul and Betty) are not Japanese. Their encounter further exemplifies the racial relations of the novel, but also the peculiar interest that the Japanese have with American culture.

Face facts. I’m trying to pretend that these Japanese and I are alike. But observe: even when I burst out as to my gratification that they won the war, that my nation lost – there is still no common ground. What words mean to me is sharp contrast *vis-à-vis* them. Their brains are different. Souls likewise. Witness them drinking from English bone china cups, eating with U.S. silver, listening to Negro of music. It’s all on the surface. Advantage of wealth and power makes everything available to them. (Dick 112)

This excerpt demonstrates the position Childan is forced to take in order to stay in business. He tries to meet them in their own terms, to “belong” to their culture. However, his dislike of the Japanese shines through. He sees them as being different from himself and other Americans, the oriental Other present in the society of the western coast of the United States. This attitude can be understood to reflect the attitudes of the Americans towards the immigrants coming from the east to the post-war America in the 1950s. Jane Yamashiro writes that after the post-war internment camp period, the discussion centered on what

Japanese Americans were entitled to and how to react once those rights were taken away.

Opinions differed, and a spectrum of responses ensued, but the mainstream strategy was

to cooperate with the U.S. government to demonstrate loyalty to the United States. Many felt they had no other option and trusted that the government was looking out for their best interests. In this way, most Japanese Americans adopted a tactic of Americanization and assimilation, and those who took on different approaches were often ostracized and marginalized by the larger community. (985)

The passage above places these attitudes in a new context. In the world of *MHC* the social relations between the Japanese and the Americans are reversed, but the logic inherent their mutual relations remains. The Kasouras are clearly (post-war) second-generation Japanese that have become Americanized, which becomes apparent of their mimicking of American food and cultural interests such as jazz music. Nevertheless, Childan feels that their interest is “all on the surface” (Dick 112), suggesting that to own American things is fashionable, and has nothing to do with the things themselves.

However, in the world of *MHC* it is the Americans that have to accustom themselves to the lifestyle of their Japanese masters. Their encounter is not authentic in a sense, because Childan has a vested commercial interest in it. When analyzed in Sartre’s terms, Robert Childan here substitutes being-for-itself with being-in-itself. He feels that the Japanese all see him as a “yank” and an antique dealer (Dick 12). Childan is trapped by his own inauthenticity, and therefore cannot really create an authentic connection with the Kasouras. It can be said that the disconnection between these two cultures, the American and the Japanese, is twofold: firstly, the Americans (or at least a part of them) wish to identify with the Japanese culture because they are economically dependent on them. Secondly, American historical memorabilia has become fashionable among the Japanese, and because of this their interest in the American culture is almost fetishist, with little or no “real” relation to things purchased or consumed. Paradoxically the Japanese wish to adopt part of the American culture in order to belong, and this can be seen as a genuine effort from the Japanese to create an authentic connection with the Americans. However, Robert Childan cannot accept this. While he

seems to resent their interest in American memorabilia and culture, though his livelihood is dependent on it, because of his inherent racism he cannot accept the gesture the Kasouras try to make during the dinner. Instead, he seems to be offended by their “fake” interest in American things. This is not because he hates the Japanese, but because his own culture has been devalued in the post-war cultural environment and he has nothing to be particularly proud of. The lack of meaningful identity within his own culture turns outwards and manifests itself as xenophobia and racism.

While Childan’s encounter with the Kasouras sheds light on their racial difference, it also brings up the issue of the war. Abendsen’s book is a hot topic among the Japanese who, unlike the Germans, have not banned it. When this issue comes up while they are eating, Childan thinks to himself: “Think how it would have been had we won! Would have crushed them out of existence. No Japan today, and the U.S.A gleaming great sole power in entire wide world. He thought: I must read this *Grasshopper* book. Patriotic duty from the sound of it” (Dick 113). Thus, the meaning that the *Grasshopper* conveys is different to Americans, the Japanese and also to the Germans. Whereas for Childan the idea of the Allies winning the war conveys a sort of national pride deprived from them in the real world, the Japanese seem mostly indifferent towards Abendsen’s book.

Now that I have established the cultural conditions that the Americans live in the west coast, I will consider the process of identity construction in more detail. I will discuss the issue of fake antique market that is the livelihood of many characters in the story, and its peculiar appeal to the Japanese. Moreover, I will show how the production of fakes devalues the whole American handicrafts market and results in Childan’s hateful attitude towards the Japanese.

3.1.2 Artifacts and Identity

This chapter examines the issue of cultural production. I will begin by revealing how the system of cultural production in *MHC* is an example of the cultural logic prevalent in postmodernism. After that, I will show how the industrial production of historical artifacts detaches the connection of any “real” historicity, and moreover, how this disconnection affects the characters either producing or consuming these artifacts.

The most central character with regards to producing historical artifacts in *MHC* is the American industrialist Wyndham-Matson, a wealthy man who owns several businesses, the most notable one of which is the factory producing fake historical artifacts. Their best selling product is the Colt .44 revolver from the Civil War era, popular among Japanese historical enthusiasts. However, the issue of historicity with regards to the revolvers becomes questioned, as a strange man (later revealed to be Frank Frink) visits Childan’s store, and all but accuses the store owner of selling counterfeit items. As a result, Childan has the revolver examined, and finds out what he already suspected: that it is a well-made replica. When Wyndham-Matson hears of this, he elaborates the issue of historicity to his female companion:

’This whole damn historicity business is nonsense. Those Japs are bats and I’ll prove it.’
Getting up, he hurried into his study, returned at once with two cigarette lighters which he set down on the coffee table. ‘Look at these. Look the same same, don’t they? Well, listen. One has historicity in it. [...] One of those two Zippo lighters was in Franklin D. Roosevelt’s pocket when he was assassinated. And one wasn’t [...] You can’t tell which is which.’ (Dick 65-66)

The Zippo lighter he shows is a good practical example of commercial products that have imagined value. The point here that he makes is that “historicity” is not an inherent quality of the lighter, as the original is indistinguishable from the copy. Moreover, as he further explains, the historical value comes from the fact that Roosevelt (allegedly) owned that particular lighter, which has to be proven: “‘I’d have to prove it to you with some sort of document. A paper of authenticity. And so it’s all a fake, a mass delusion. The paper proves its worth, not the object itself!’” (Dick 66). The value of Roosevelt’s lighter is defined not only in relation to others like it, but also through this document, which is in turn validated by others, and by the market system in general. Thus, the item and its value are not in isolation to surroundings, and as Wyndham-Matson thinks to himself, “[t]he paper and the lighter had cost him a fortune, but they were worth it – because they enabled him to prove that he was right, that the word fake meant nothing really, since the word ‘authentic’ meant nothing really” (66). Thus, he has acquired the lighter and the certificate to prove a point, not to others, but to himself: that the fake is indistinguishable from the authentic.

When we apply Baudrillard’s theory here, the result is obvious. The (fake) Colt .44 has become a simulacrum of the original when repeatedly copied through the process of industrial production. It has ceased to refer to the original, or rather, the sign that it represents, and instead points only to other signs. Thus, it has become commodified in the field of the hyperreal, where the products no longer refer to the underlying reality, but only to symbols that they represent, and they in turn to others. In particular, when we examine the historical artifacts market in this context, value is wholly imagined, derived from qualities not inherent in the object, as Wyndham-Matson’s example of the Zippo lighter proves, but from the historicity associated with the object. What this means is that these historical artifacts have, because of the consumer culture of the Japanese, become commodified: mere simulacra that bear no connection to anything real. Subsequently, because of the consumer habits, the antique market has become inflated, and the workers skilled in their field, such as Frank Frink, have been employed in the production of the aforementioned simulacra.

Further on in the story Robert Childan contemplates this disconnection:

The Colt .44 affair had shaken him considerably. He no longer viewed his stock with the same reverence. Bit of knowledge like that goes a long way. Akin to primal childhood awakening; facts of life. Show, he ruminated, the link with our early years: not merely U.S. history involved, but our personal. As if, he thought, question might arise as to authenticity of our birth certificate. Or our impression of dad. (Dick 141)

Coming from an antique store owner, his concern is understandable. His whole business model is based on selling historical artifacts, and if he cannot be sure of their authenticity, then he is deliberately deceiving his customers. Moreover, the connection with personal history, as well as with his chosen profession becomes also destabilized. After all, also a birth certificate is, in a way, a document of authenticity; it is a piece of paper that proves who you are and where you come from. It is a link to something real, and that link can be questioned, or even de-validated. It has value only in relation to others like it, and through the validation of a social contract by other people. Similarly, the production of fake artifacts not only affects the value of the products (be them authentic or not) but also the value of the workers. By employing them in the process of copying, Wyndham-Matson actually devalues the American workforce in its entirety, because he is stripping them of the thing that defines the value of their work: the end product. In a way, men like him exploit the system and use the market interest of the Japanese for their personal profit, and subsequently, to oppress Americans and their culture.

However, this situation starts to change when Frank Frink and Ed McCarthy begin their own business producing jewelry of their own design. An opportunity presents itself when McCarthy steps into Childan's store and showcases the jewelry that he and Frank Frink have manufactured. To quote the novel:

Most of the pieces were abstract, whirls of fire, loops, designs which to some extent the molten metals had taken on their own. Some had spider-web delicacy, an airiness; others had massive powerful, almost barbaric heaviness. There was an amazing range of shape, considering how few pieces lay on the velvet trays; and yet one store, Frink realized, could buy everything we have laid out here. (Dick 131)

The notable aspect here is the abstract nature of the jewelry that Childan also notices. Their shape and form are emphasized in the passage, as if they embodied qualities such as “airiness” or “heaviness” that the “molten metals had taken on their own” (Dick 131). The jewelry pieces are not copies of anything but their own original design, and do not refer to anything; they are, in a way, empty vessels ready to take on any meaning that the consumers wish to imbue them with. At first Childan is unimpressed by them, but eventually gives in and allows Ed to leave the jewelry in his store. Later on after the visit, he realizes that “[w]ith these, *there is no problem of authenticity*. And this problem may someday wreck the historic American artifacts industry. Not today or tomorrow – but after that, who knows” (Dick 145; emphasis original). Thus, the jewelry is a promise of something new: for Ed and Frank they are the result of their handiwork and a new channel through which the American artificers can express something original; what this means is that the authenticity of the jewelry is a promise of authenticity and financial security for themselves. For Childan, they offer a way out of the problematic nature of historical artifacts and the question of their authenticity, because they do not refer to anything outside themselves, but are a thing in themselves.

To sum up, the production of the fake artifacts constitutes as a form of cultural oppression of the Americans. The fake historical items produced by industrialists like Wyndham-Matson are a prime example of the commodification of the American culture in the novel. In turn, these fakes also exemplify the commodification of national history, symbolized by the Colt .44 revolver. However, there is also a glimpse of the counterculture in the form of the jewelry produced by Frank Frink and Ed McCarthy, which I will elaborate in the next section.

3.1.3 Demand for Recognition

In the previous sections I have explained the conditions that the Japanese and Americans live in San Francisco. In addition, I established that the Americans are subjugated under the Japanese rule, and that their condition is the result of economic and symbolic oppression which is implemented through the market. Because of this, they have been denied recognition as equals, and have been forced to lead an inauthentic existence. In addition, the historical goods market that the Japanese are interested in is a prime example of the commodification of American culture. As the story of *MHC* progresses, Ed McCarthy's and Frank Frink's business begins to take off, which symbolizes the need that Americans have to redefine their place in society, and a new kind of value that American culture begets. Robert Childan decides give one of the pieces of jewelry as a present for the Kasouras. This results in a curious encounter between Childan and Mr. Kasoura, who explains his vision that the piece induced:

'Here is a piece of metal which has been melted until it has become shapeless. It represents nothing. Nor does it have design, of any intentional sort. It is merely amorphous. One might say, it is mere content, deprived of form. [...] I have for several days now inspected it, and yet for no logical reason *I feel certain emotional fondness*. [...] [I]t somehow partakes of Tao. It is balanced. The forces within this piece are stabilized. [...] So to speak, this object has made peace with the universe. It has separated from it and hence has managed to come to homeostasis.' (Dick 170; emphasis original)

Paul Kasoura's explanation of the object confirms what I had already discussed in section 3.1.2. The piece appears to him as shapeless, and still has content, but not form. It is, in a way, an end product of a process where form is not forced on the object, but is allowed to occur freely, to take any shape. Paul further contemplates that "'The hands of the artificer' [...] 'had wu and allowed that wu to flow

into this piece. [...] It is complete, Robert. By contemplating it, we gain more *wu* ourselves. We experience the tranquility associated not with art, but with holy things” (Dick 171). Thus, the piece is the end product of the inspiration and skill by its shaper, in this case, Frank Frink. Andrew Lison comments on the quality of *wu* present in jewelry that it is

an untranslatable Chinese term which, for Freedman, suggests “an achievement of peaceful balance and proportion, and a true sense of fitting properly and without strain or force into the universe as a whole” (170). Milicia writes that *wu* is “more familiar to the West in its Japanese translation, *satori* and is often rendered as ‘enlightenment’ and ‘inner experience’” (xi), although in comparison with *wu*, *satori*, like enlightenment, is less of an aesthetic category than a transcendent one. (Lison 54)

The notion of *wu* with regards to the jewelry is a complex one. It can be understood as a symbol of free expression, one that can only be achieved through motivation and opportunity, as opposed to the earlier work Frink did as an employee of Wyndham-Matson, creating replicas of historical objects. That was because of necessity, and catering to the Japanese historical enthusiasts, and the jewelry is an antithesis of this. Moreover, the properties imbued in this piece, as Lison suggests, point to not only original (and authentic) piece of art, but also to a certain spiritual quality. What the text suggests is that aesthetic and spiritual categories are linked, and that art can (and does) help to understand and interpret the reality, and also can help to understand ourselves. The *satori*, a Buddhist term for enlightenment, can be achieved through meditation and mindfulness of oneself and surroundings. Thus, the piece is also a symbol of the outside reality so to speak, an item of focus and a tool that can be used in attaining enlightenment. In addition, the piece also symbolizes the need of American workers to redefine their place in society, to create something uniquely theirs to replace the commodified historical artifact market that has become a tool the Japanese to undermine them.

Continuing his analysis, Paul Kasoura explains to Childan his experience with the piece. To quote the novel:

'To have no historicity, and also no artistic, aesthetic worth, and yet partake in some ethereal value – that is a marvel. [...] [I]t is a fact that wu is customarily found in least imposing places, as in the Christian aphorism, "stones rejected by the builder". [...] In other words, an entire new world is pointed to, by this. [...] It is authentically a new thing on the face of the world.' (Dick 171)

While Kasoura's remark of the piece containing no artistic worth can be seen as a derogatory remark, it can also be understood as a comment on the shape of the jewelry as being spontaneous or "natural" occurrence. Nevertheless, it is clear that he is overall taken by the piece, not having encountered anything like it before. As if testing Childan, Paul suggests that he meet with a business acquaintance of his who deals with lucky charms and trinkets. What Paul actually suggests is that Childan could enter into business with this person and turn the Edfrank jewelry into mass-produced trinkets to be sold across America and Asia. Thus, Childan is faced with a dilemma: either to take the side of the American workers and preserve the uniqueness of the jewelry, or to go into mass-production, and destroy it in the process: "Childan felt stunned. The man's telling me I'm *obliged* to assume moral responsibility for Edfrank jewellery! Crackpot neurotic Japanese world view: Nothing less than number one spiritual and business relationship with the jewellery tolerable in the eyes of Paul Kasoura" (Dick 172; emphasis original). In this passage the Childan's disposition towards the Japanese surfaces once again. His first reaction is to dismiss Paul's suggestion, interpreting it as an attempt to humiliate him, and subsequently, the American population in general. After some deliberation, Childan accepts the proposal, only to decline it just a moment afterwards. He realizes that if he were to do that, he would not only sell Ed and Frank short, but the whole American worker industry. He replies thusly: "'[t]he men who made this' Childan said, 'are American proud artists. Myself included. To suggest trashy good-luck charms therefore insults us and I ask for apology'"

(Dick 178). This moment in the story is the turning point for the waking of the American consciousness, and Edfrank's jewelry is its symbol. Childan, although not an artificer or a laborer himself, decides to take a stand, although a different choice would make him a rich man. What he is actually doing, to use Charles Taylor's term, is that he demands for recognition, not just for himself or the American artists, but for his people in general. In so doing, he also facilitates the birth of a new American identity, free from the constraints of the Japanese-controlled market capitalism and social oppression. He is saying that we will not bow down anymore, and Kasoura understands this. After a short pause he eventually apologizes. Although he clearly gives in, this has been Paul's plan since he suggested the deal in the first place: to make Robert Childan understand what he would sacrifice for his individual gain. This is the central issue in defining authenticity in Taylor's view: "our identities are formed in dialogue with others, in agreement or struggle with their recognition of us" (45-46). Would Childan accept the deal, he would symbolically deny the self-fulfillment for American workers everywhere by reducing the fruits of their labor to mere commodities, and subsequently, turning the artificers themselves into a commodity.

In Sum, the jewelry of Frank Frink offers the Americans a chance for a new identity. They can be understood as the antithesis of the commodified American culture and history that is symbolized by the fake antiques that Wyndham-Matson produces. The turning point for the Americans in the novel is Robert Childan's decision to support Frank and Ed instead of capitalizing on their work, which in turn would undermine the American population. Next, I will examine the question of alternate history in terms of identity and authenticity of the main characters.

3.2 Alternate History and Authenticity

The issue of history and its meaning to the characters is central to understanding *MHC*. After all, the story of the novel itself answers the question of what would have happened if the Axis nations had won the war. However, the world that the novel envisions is just one possible outcome of events. Dick emphasizes this by implementing a second alternate history in the novel within the novel that the characters read and interpret for themselves. The readers of *MHC* are put in the same position as its characters: in reading the alternate history, we extrapolate meaning by mirroring the world of the text with our own. In the following sections I will firstly explore the relation of the *Grasshopper* to the characters and to the story *MHC* as a whole. Secondly, I will address the issue of historical and ahistorical items and their meaning in relation to the ethical questions that the characters face. Finally, I will examine the metafictional elements of the novel and consider them in the context of the concept of eastern philosophy, Tao.

3.2.1 Interpreting *Grasshopper*

The artifact central to the issue of historical representation in the story is the novel within the novel, *Grasshopper Lies Heavy*. As I already briefly mentioned in section 3.2.1, it is an issue that very much divides the people living in America. Whereas the Japanese have allowed the book to remain in circulation, and the Americans of San Francisco are fascinated by it, the Reich has banned it because they see the book as a threat:

Reiss shut the book and sat for a time. In spite of himself he was upset. More pressure should have been put on the Japs, he said to himself, to suppress this damn book. In fact,

it's obviously deliberate on their part. They could have arrested this – whatever his name is. Abendsen. They have plenty of power in the Middle West. [...] [T]his book, Reiss thought, is dangerous. (Dick 126-127)

The thoughts of Hugo Reiss, the consul of San Francisco, demonstrate the general attitude the Reich has towards *The Grasshopper*. This discrepancy in the attitudes of the two dominant world powers demonstrates aptly the difference in their methods of rule and their attitude towards the subjugated peoples. Whereas the Japanese aim to control the Americans through social interaction and the market, the Germans take the totalitarian route. They aim to eliminate any political opposition through violence and physical force, a perfect example of which is the attempt is the plot against Japan that becomes one of the central elements in the story. The plan of the Reich is to fake a border conflict in the Rocky Mountains, which would enable them to respond with military force. However, this is just camouflage; their true goal is a full scale nuclear strike against the Japanese home islands (Dick 182). The goal of Mr. Baynes, who is actually a German intelligence officer under a fake identity, is to notify the Japanese of this plot by meeting the emperor's personal envoy, general Tedeki. They manage to meet in Tagomi's office, but the meeting is brutally interrupted by German commandos who attempt to take Baynes's life, but are prevented from doing so by the Japanese security, and finally, by an antique Colt .44 owned by Mr. Tagomi.

Thus, the world of *MHC* reflects that of our own in the beginning of the 1960s. Although there is a peace between the two world powers on the surface, this peace is the product of a balance of powers, and a result of fear. The threat of a nuclear attack and of ultimate mutual destruction is ever present in the lives of both Japanese and the Germans, and therefore also among the Americans. While the story of *MHC* centers among the "microcosm" of the Japanese-American society of San Francisco, the nationwide powers are at play behind the scenes, and the interplay between the two levels defines the story of the book.

This interplay also plays a part in the story of Joe and Juliana, as they journey towards Denver, and eventually to Abendsen's house. During their trip, Juliana reads parts of *Grasshopper*, which leads to a discussion about the war and the possible future of the world, had the allies won. It quickly becomes clear that they represent different sides of the conflict: Juliana is an American from San Francisco, whereas Joe tells her that he fought in North Africa on the axis side of the conflict. As Juliana reads about the aftermath of the war and the results of New Deal, Joe interrupts her:

'You know what he's done, don't you? He's taken the best part of Nazism, the socialist part [...] and who's he giving credit to? The New Deal. And he's left out the bad part, the S.S part, the racial extermination and segregation. It's utopia! You imagine if the Allies had won, the New Deal would have been able to revive the economy and make those socialist welfare improvements, like he says? Hell no; he's talking about a form of state syndicalism, a welfare state like we developed under Duce.' (Dick 155)

It becomes clear from this that Joe believes that America could not have had the resources (or the will) to revive the European economy after the war. This is because of, according to him, "'human nature. [...] Nature of states. Suspicion, fear, greed'" (Dick 157). Thus, Joe thinks that humans are inherently selfish and that they have to be controlled in order to achieve true progress in society. In addition, the issue of democracy and leadership crops up further in the conversation, which is another point that they completely disagree on. Joe elaborates his opinion by stating that

'a state is no better than its leader. *Führerprinzip* – Principle of Leadership, like the Nazis say. They're right. Even this Abendsen has to face that. [...] If they had won, all they'd have thought about was making more money, that upper class. Abendsen, he's wrong; there would have been no social reform, no welfare public works plans – The Anglo-Saxon plutocrats wouldn't have permitted it.'

Juliana thought, Spoken like a devout Fascist. (Dick 157-158; emphasis original)

Joe firmly believes that the negative qualities in humans will win. He feels that if democracy were allowed, the plutocrats would win and no progress would be achieved. Thus, he believes that we have to be controlled by a powerful leader, who, like Plato's philosopher king, will know better for the all of us in an ideal situation. As Juliana remarks, this is the fascist's position on society. When interpreted using Erich Fromm's theory, Joe has a masochistic outlook on society. He will gladly relinquish his own freedom for "the greater good" of mankind, which in this case means the German Reich. This is because, to apply Erich Fromm's ideas, he follows the soldier's ethic, where he does not have to bear the burden of responsibility for his own actions, because he is just following orders. The people who give those orders "know better", and are thus better equipped to deal with the responsibility, and possible consequences of his actions. Therefore Joe's ideology is another form of adopting an inauthentic existence in order to avoid the burden responsibility that freedom of thought requires of an individual.

When compared to this, Juliana seems to have an inherent skepticism towards all authoritarian figures. However, at the same time she seems to be drawn to powerful males like Joe, who is the opposite of her husband Frank. Earlier in the story she encounters Joe in a diner in Canon city. Her first impression is one of likeness: "[w]atching him, Juliana thought, It's idealism that makes him that bitter. Asking too much out of life. Always moving on, restless and griped. I'm the same way; I couldn't stay on the West Coast and eventually I won't be able to stand it here" (Dick 39). It is apparent that she is restless, and she is searching for some kind of a meaning in life. Her marriage with Frank Frink comes across as one phase of this; she married him in order to gain some stability or meaning, but apparently it did not pay off. Although they are still married, she has moved to Canon City to teach judo, while Frank remains behind in San Francisco. In fact, Juliana is the one of the two characters in the novel that is motivated by the search for truth (the other being Tagomi, who I will discuss in the following section). Near the end of the story they reach Denver and go shopping for new clothes to look presentable upon meeting Abendsen.

As they searched for a good hotel, Juliana kept glancing at the man beside her. With his hair short and blond, and in his new clothes, he doesn't look like the same person, she thought. Do I like him better this way? It was hard to tell. And me – When I've been able to arrange for my hair being done, we'll be two different persons, almost. Created out of nothing or, rather, out of money. But I must get my hair done, she told herself. (Dick 198)

This passage shows, in contrast to the previous one, a different kind of inauthenticity: one that is the result of consumerism. Joe and Juliana go “shopping for identity” in a sense, spending a great deal of money for fancy clothes that make them seem like totally different people, created out of money, as Juliana aptly thinks. While their transformation has a reason, the mechanism is facilitated and provided by their society that defines what is fashionable and what is not. This transformation is only on the surface and in the eyes of the other. In other words, it only affects the social self, and especially in this example the game that Joe and Juliana play is one kind of imitation, an attempt to disguise themselves as ordinary citizens while on their mission. Unbeknownst to Juliana, she and her newly created looks are about to be used by Joe to get into the Abendsen residence. Before they get that far Joe's restlessness to move on results in a confrontation, where he admits his plan to use her as a bait for Abendsen. This in turn upsets Juliana, and she panics: “‘It is awful,’ she said. ‘They violate. I ought to know.’ Ready for a purse snatcher; the various night prowlers, I can certainly handle. Where had this one gone? Slapping his neck, doing the dance.” (Dick 205). Here we can see that the text becomes fragmented, which relates the disjointed state of mind Juliana experiences. Moreover, it illuminates the origin of Juliana's restlessness and distrust: in the past she has been the victim of men, and because of that she took up judo, so that she could defend herself. Thus she is able to overcome Joe and slit his carotid artery with a razor. After that she goes forward on her own, leaving Joe to bleed out in the hotel room.

In the end of the novel Juliana arrives at Abendsen's house. The beginning of the chapter makes it clear that it is not the high castle in which he is rumored to live. Actually, “[t]he house was

ordinary, well maintained and the grounds tended. There was even a child's tricycle parked in the long cement driveway" (Dick 240). Similarly, when he finally meets Abendsen, his appearance is overly emphasized: "[h]e wore a hand-tailored, expensive natural fibre suit, perhaps English wool; the suit augmented his wide robust shoulders with no lines of its own. In all her life she had never seen a suit quite like it; she found herself staring in fascination" (Dick 242). It is clear that his outlook reflects the commercial success he has attained with the book. However, what Juliana encounters is his social self, one that is defined by his outlook and made possible by money. The "real" man is found somewhere beyond the surface, which Juliana proceeds to unravel. She asks him about how and why he wrote the book, and her suspicion is confirmed to be true: that Abendsen used the oracle in writing the *Grasshopper*. His wife tells her that

‘One by one Hawth made the choices. Thousands of them. By means of the lines. Historic period. Subject. Characters. Plot. It took years. Hawth even asked the oracle what sort of success it would be. It told him that it would be a very great success, the first real one of his career. So you were right. You must use the oracle quite a lot yourself, to have known.’
(Dick 245)

Juliana is the character in *MHC* who is first and foremost motivated by the need to know the truth. From the beginning she is unsatisfied, lacking something in her life, and this restlessness is the main instigator that puts her on the path that leads to Abendsen. Ultimately, she wants to know why the oracle wrote the book. As ask the question, the answer suggests that the book is actually true. “Raising his head, Hawthorne scrutinized her. He had now almost savage expression. ‘It means, does it, that my book is true?’ ‘Yes’ she said”. Her reaction to his is the opposite of that of the Abendsens:

‘How strange’ Juliana said. ‘I never would have thought the truth would make you angry.’
Truth, she thought. As terrible as death. But harder to find. I’m lucky. ‘I thought you’d

be as pleased and excited as I am. It's a misunderstanding, isn't it?' she smiled, and after a pause Mrs Abendsen managed to smile back. (Dick 248)

Although both Abendsen and her wife are obviously shocked by the truth, Juliana seems content. In the end when she learns the truth she's been after, it seems to put her at ease, satisfying her need for the truth. Lison, quoting Warrick, notes that 'it is Juliana who has found the middle way, and not Tagomi, who "cannot fully understand even when he is directed to it"' (60). While she refers to the Buddhist concept of balance, in terms of my study this can be understood as authenticity: as a balance between one's existence and the world. Whereas Tagomi's experience with the other world that the Jewelry shows him leaves him confused and lost, resulting later in a heart attack, Juliana, when faced with the truth of the world they inhabit, is able to accept it and attain peace with herself and consequently the world. In other words, she is able to attain true authenticity.

In conclusion, the ways in which the different characters of the novel read the *Grasshopper* imply different ways of interpreting the world and negotiating identity, the case in point being the difference between Joe and Juliana. Joe represents the fascist, masculine and masochistic point of view, which presupposes that the human nature needs guidance and control, and that democracy leads to corruption. As opposed to this, Juliana has a more skeptical outlook. Her distrust stems from fear of the powerful male such as Joe, but it also symbolizes the fear that Americans have of totalitarian regime(s) such as the Germans of the novel. She is also the instigator at the end of the novel, and the only one who is set free by knowing the truth.

3.2.2 Ethics and Authenticity

This section shows that the representation of history in *MHC* works at two levels. Firstly, it is manifested as the history of a nation and the world in general, where the story of a nation is not only based on facts, but it is also connected to the process of writing history, and the social and political circumstances affecting it. The use of the *Grasshopper* as an alternate history within the story serves to unfold this process, as the characters struggle to make sense of it, much in the same way as we see the story of *MHC* through the lens that is our own reality. Secondly, history also affects the characters on a personal level. A good example of this is the confrontation that takes place in Tagomi's office. German commandos infiltrate the building in order to kill Mr Baynes, a double agent aiming to warn the Japanese of the German attack plan. As the commandos arrive in Tagomi's office, he kills them with a fake antique Colt .44 purchased from Robert Childan. This event drastically upsets him: "Mr Baynes, seeing Mr Tagomi distractedly manipulating the vegetable stalks, recognized how deep the man's distress was. For him, Mr Baynes thought, this event, his having had to kill and mutilate these two men, is not only dreadful; it is inexplicable" (Dick 194). Being a Buddhist, Tagomi is understandably shaken by the event. However, the fact that he happens to own the revolver saves them all, although his conscience is tarnished by that fact that he has taken a life. As Baynes thinks to himself, "[w]hat has happened here is justified, or not justified, by what happens later. Can we perhaps save the lives of millions, all Japan in fact?" (Dick 194).

Thus the ethical justification of taking a life is in this case teleological. Tagomi can only hope that his actions will save millions. In an attempt to redeem himself, or at least put the confrontation out of his mind, he seeks get rid of the gun: "One thread left, connecting me with the voluntary. I possibly could manage my anxious proclivities by a ruse: trade the gun in on more historicity sanctioned item. This gun, for me, has too much subjective history ... all of the wrong kind.

But that ends with me; no one else can experience it from the gun. Within my psyche only” (Dick 215). The event has changed the relation of him and the gun, as it no longer is only an artifact of national history, but also personal one for him. Therefore even seeing the revolver reminds him of the cardinal sin that he committed. While it is a tragedy, it is a personal one, and as he ruminates, the connection ends with him. To anyone else the revolver does not carry such personal significance.

This dichotomy of personal and national significance is the crux of the problematic with history and identity in *MHC*, much like Childan’s realization of the fact that he sells fake historical items. As Evans notes,

The pistol was purchased from Childan; it is never made clear whether it is a fake, but presumably an "authentic" hundred-year-old pistol would be less likely to work, and therefore less able to resist evil. Frank Frink, maker of the pendant that embodies wu and formerly the most skillful maker of fake historic pistols for Wyndam-Matson, was quite possibly the maker of the pistol. Tagomi's use of the (presumably) fake pistol has very real results, not only in shooting Nazis but in revealing the Nazis' plans. (372)

It can be said that the gun Tagomi uses, whether fake or not, still has use value, a fact which saved his and Baynes’ life. Nevertheless, after he uses it the way the original creators intended it to be used he cannot overcome the regret of doing so. He tries to sell it back to Childan who refuses to buy it. However, his visit to the store yields him a piece of Edfrank jewelry that he later meditates on in an effort to find some redemption for his sin. He is transported through the piece into another reality of San Francisco in the 1960s, possibly the “real” one of our timeline. The Americans there refuse to give him a seat in the diner, which angers him, but also results in an epiphany:

seen through glass darkly not a metaphor, but astute reference to optical distortion. We really do see astigmatically, in fundamental sense: our space and our time creations of

our own psyche, and when these momentarily falter – like acute disturbance of middle ear. Occasionally we list eccentrically, all sense of balance gone. (Dick 225)

What Tagomi realizes is that his world is just one of many, both in an actual and a metaphorical sense. Although the piece of jewelry momentarily transports him into a different reality, it might have as well shown him the same world through someone else's eyes. The experience of reality is always "through glass darkly", warped by knowledge and perception, defined and confined by the subject. Moreover, as Evans puts it, "Tagomi must come to terms with a world in which, like the worlds of Dick and his readers, multiple fragmented realities coexist, hegemonic and counter-hegemonic, emergent and normative, imposed and imagined" (374). None of these realities is more "real" or "authentic" than the next; they are all different perceptions of the same object.

In order to truly understand, coexist and be authentic in their own terms, people like Tagomi who wield institutional power must make an effort to understand their Other, in this case the oppressed Americans. It is fitting that the jewelry, a symbol of American independence and a new emerging national identity, is the vessel of this realization for him. Moreover, Tagomi's experience, a result of his moral crisis, underlines the fact that the world is not easily divisible in terms good and bad; even he, a moral man by his own standards, is capable of terrible deeds given the right circumstances. This point is reiterated in the rumination of Captain Wegener alias Baynes, who in the next chapter returns to Germany: "[w]e do not have an ideal world, such as we would like, where morality is easy because cognition is easy. Where one can do right with no effort because he can detect the obvious" (Dick 236). This is the central point in the theories regarding authenticity that I have discussed. If cognition was easy and "the obvious" clear to us all, there would not be need for philosophical debate.

To sum up, the vehicle of history in MHC has a kind of a dual nature. On one hand, it refers to the canonized story of the nation(s), which may or may not be true in actual sense, but it is nevertheless constantly interpreted by the characters for their own purposes. On the other, history is

also something personal, which defines the identities of everyone. However, personal history can also become under question and suffer a crisis of meaning, as happens to Tagomi, who is forced re-evaluate his ethical values. The pistol which he uses to shoot the German agents becomes a reminder of his sin and forces him to seek forgiveness, which in turn leads to his otherworldly experience through the jewelry. By essentially experiencing the world through the eyes of the Other, and he understands that he, like everyone, sees only one side of reality, and that perception is always dependent on the point of view, a fundamental realization which is reiterated numerous times in different discussions of (post)modernity.

3.2.3 Tao and the Consequences of Metafiction

This section examines the use of I Ching and *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy* in Dick's text in more detail. Firstly, they act as motifs which enable the characters to have an alternate view of the reality they are a part of; in a sense, they help them to transcend their position and understanding of the world they live in. Secondly, they link the two nested realities to a third one which is a non-textual reality. While I have already discussed the *Grasshopper* in the context of its meaning to the characters, it also has to be examined in relation to I Ching, and against the background of Chinese philosophy and Tao. It is concept of balance between two opposite forces that are present in the universe, yin and yang: the first one being the negative force, while the second is the active. Patricia Warrick elaborates on their interplay that

Taoism describes reality as a pair of opposites incessantly interacting in a process; the outlook is dynamic, not static. The “end is an ordered nature rather than chaos. In point of process, there is contradiction as well as harmony, and in point of reality, there is unity

in multiplicity. The apparent dualism and pluralism are, in each case, a dynamic monism through the dialectic. (Warrick 77-78)

Thus, Taoist philosophy's understanding differs from that of classical western philosophy and science. Instead of objective viewpoint that aims to discern the individual parts and observes and analyzes them apart from each other, Taoism represents an esoteric, holistic view. Yin and Yang are polar opposite forces, but they are not separate. Neither is outcome of their interplay random, but an "ordered nature" (Warrick 78), which is always changing. Moreover, "the aim and task of every man, then, is to find the Tao or a way of harmony balancing opposites" (Warrick 78). This is also the logic behind I Ching, or the book of changes, as it is also called. Being of ancient origin, it has been used in the Chinese tradition for thousands of years as a kind of a divining tool. However, rather than telling the future, "it is a book of profound wisdom, pointing to the way of harmony between men and between man and nature" (Warrick 78-79).

When considered in the context of authenticity, the logic of Tao reiterates the problem that western thinkers from Sartre to Taylor and beyond have analyzed: the issue of seeking balance is central in both schools of thought. The oracle is used throughout the text by the characters, mainly Frank Frink, Robert Childan, Tagomi and also Abendsen, who has used it extensively in writing the *Grasshopper*. Particularly Tagomi, an older male of oriental persuasion, takes I Ching very seriously: 'We are absurd' Mr Tagomi said, 'because we live by a five-thousand-year-old book. We ask it questions as if it were alive. It *is* alive. As is the Christian Bible; many books are actually alive. Not in metaphoric fashion. Spirit animates it' (Dick 72; emphasis original). What makes these texts alive is the meaning that their respective cultures place in them. The spirit is therefore not in the text or the object itself, but in the meaning that the reader(s) associate with them. It is a cultural construct, and much like authenticity, it is contingent on the time, place and cultural context.

However, what differentiates *I Ching* from the other texts mentioned in the novel is its purpose as a divining tool. Its form of reading encapsulates the interpretive work we do when reading any text. Moreover, the answer it gives is not only contingent on the abovementioned circumstances, but also on pure chance, as the throwing of vegetable stalks or coins denominates the correct line to be interpreted. As Robert Chidan ruminates halfway through the story, “The Moment changes. One must be ready to change with it. Or otherwise left high and dry. *Adapt*” (Dick 146; emphasis original). Thus, it is clear that *MHC* foregrounds the issue of *change* as the only constant in the world. This change is made up of different cycles that forever follow each other, and the wise person is one who has the insight to recognize the change adapt to it in order to grow and thrive as a person and as a human being.

Similarly, the story of *MHC* as a whole can be seen in terms of Taoist philosophy as an exercise to find balance in an imbalanced world. This can be seen, firstly, in the American quest for recognition in the eyes of the Japanese colonial masters. Secondly, Juliana’s and Joe’s trip to meet the author of the *Grasshopper*, Hawthorne Abendsen, can also be seen in terms of polar opposites, Joe being the passive, resistant force with the intent to preserve the status quo, while Juliana is the active element and the primus motor of change, because she is motivated by the search for truth. Thirdly, Tagomi’s spiritual and ethical crisis can also be analyzed in terms of Tao; his ultimate sin of taking a life is the fall to an imbalanced state, which he tries to reconcile with the aid of the Edfrank jewelry. Finally, the negotiation of meaning between the different histories and worlds can also be examined in terms of Taoist philosophy. The canonized history of the world in *MHC* is the yin, or the dark, passive force that resists, and the *Grasshopper* is yang, the light, active force that symbolizes change. Moreover, the use of *I Ching* in the creation of both texts puts Dick and Abendsen (his fictional counterpart), in a similar position, as Dick also used the oracle in the creation of *MHC* (Lison 46). Thus, both texts are the result of thousands of random outcomes which have then been interpreted and consequently turned into prose. Whereas they are the respective authors of the two novels, they

are also interpreters, much like historians, seeking to create meaning and implementing cause and effect into material which is, in a way, result of a random process, much like the past can be understood to be. This is not to say that historical causality would not exist, but our way thinking along certain lines obscures other possible explanations when we choose only one. Both Wilson and Poster support this point of view, as words not only construct reality, but also obscure some meanings as well as construct others. Moreover, what is left out (whether intentionally or not) in turn can be used to manipulate the readers as much as the text itself. Timothy Evans comments on this from the point of view of authenticity. To quote his essay,

in Dick's novels, competing ideas of what is authentic can literally create competing realities, worlds in which the Japanese and the Americans won the war exist simultaneously. The gateways to alternative worlds are concrete things (jewelry, a book), which are works of art crafted by individual artists; the act of artistic creation conveys a kind of authenticity. For Dick, the search for authenticity by individuals in their everyday lives is the way to fight back against those who seek to control them. "Reality" is relative and can be manipulated, but not all reality is inauthentic. Individuals must define their own authenticities. (Evans 367)

Evans' point in the end sums up my view aptly. In a postmodern society, and all the textual realities that are embedded in it, it is ultimately the task and duty of the individual to make sense of it all, and create their own authenticities and to seek balance. This is why the *Grasshopper* has such significance for the Americans in the novel: as they cannot relate to the canonized story of their nation, they turn to Abendsen's book because it enables them to imagine things differently. Therefore the *Grasshopper* offers a different story to negotiate this complex question of authenticity for a postmodern individual, and it can be said that reading it helps them in regaining a bit of their national identity, and in turn, their authenticity which was lost in the process of occupation by the axis nations.

To sum up, Dick is using Abendsen as his fictional counterpart in order to relate the real world into that (or rather, those) of the text. What this means is that all of these worlds are true and essentially no different from each other, as all of them are worlds constructed through language. Thus, the relationship is not unlike the one with *MHC* and the non-textual world of 1960s that Dick lived in when writing the novel. The crisis of the Cold War and the subsequent propaganda war resulted in complications in relating to any story that was claiming itself true. The point that Dick wants to make is that the unreliability of media and public information available in general results in a situation where all cultural information is regarded as unreliable. As a result, the terms “true” and “fake” lose their meaning, as the individual is incapable of discerning between the two. In this kind of a situation the only reasonable way of relating to the world is an all-encompassing skepticism towards any information. The end result is a complex collage of competing textual realities, which in *MHC* are “real” in an actual sense. In order to maintain an authentic identity in this situation, as Evans says, an “individuals must define their own authenticities” (367).

4. Conclusion

Dick's *The Man in the High Castle* is a product of its time. On one hand it draws from the canon of 20th century pulp science fiction that preceded it, but on the other it also takes a new kind of approach to its subject matter. It imagines a world that is definitely different from the actual non-textual reality of the 1960s, but not by using the traditional vehicles of science fiction such as space ships and ray guns; rather, the world that *MHC* imagines has a different timeline of history onwards from the Second World War. By imagining this alternate world, Dick comments on his own reality in a clever way that few writers had used before him, and many have used since. In this final chapter I will sum up the findings of this thesis, and draw a set of final conclusion(s) that show that *MHC* can be understood as a commentary on the issues of authenticity in the context of a commodified US society.

Firstly, the concept of authenticity crops up in the novel as the division between the Japanese colonialists who rule the west coast of America, and the subjugated Americans that live there. The Japanese interest in American memorabilia has resulted in widespread market for these items, so much so in fact that a whole industry of making fake copies has arisen. These products, especially the popular Colt .44 pistol, symbolize the cultural oppression and commodification of American culture and history. Particularly the character of Robert Childan, an antique dealer representing the petty bourgeois, exemplifies well the cultural conditions that the Americans live under. The commodification of the American culture has led to his inauthentic existence, as have shown in section 3.1.1, which in turn has resulted in his deep hatred for the Japanese.

Secondly, I studied the commodification of American culture in the novel in more detail in section 3.1.2. Particularly the example of the Zippo lighter further exemplifies the process by which an item or a product becomes detached from its meaning. This is because the authenticity of a product such as the lighter must be validated by a document of authenticity, which the industrialist Wyndham-

Matson proceeds to show. His point is, as he himself aptly puts it that “the word fake meant nothing really, since the word ‘authentic’ meant nothing really” (Dick 66). What this means is that the desire of the consumer market for something that is ‘authentic’ has resulted in a process where the authentic is endlessly copied to satisfy the demand of the (Japanese) consumer market. Consequently, the original has lost its meaning because of mechanical reproduction and moves to the field of Hyperreal, as Baudrillard hypothesized. The end result is that not only are the products themselves ‘fake’, but in turn the American workers producing these items have been commodified, turned into mere parts of the machine that is the historical artifact market. Thus, the historical artifact business for its part participates in the undermining of the American culture in the novel.

This brings us to the turning point in the novel, which comes around as Frank Frink decides to start their own business with Ed McCarthy in producing jewelry of their own design. Frink, who is of Jewish origin, is an artist whose skills have been going to waste in the production of the aforementioned revolvers. His jewelry in the novel symbolizes a new kind of product which is free from the historical definition, and is “authentically a new thing on the face of the world” (Dick 171). In addition, the jewelry symbolizes the emergence of new national identity for the Americans. Childan’s confrontation with Paul Kasoura over the destiny of the jewelry is the point of emergence for this new identity when he declines Kasoura’s offer to start mass-producing them to be sold as good luck charms overseas. Childan’s decision and the resulting demand of apology is the culmination point for the American authentic identity, as he realizes that the fate of American people symbolized by the jewelry lies in his hands. This can be understood as fulfilling the demand of recognition according to Charles Taylor’s theory of authenticity.

In section 3.2.1 I examined the meaning that *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy*, the novel with the novel, has for different factions in the text. While the Japanese mostly regard it as harmless, the Germans see Abendsen’s book as a threat. This is because they see the alternate history that it imagines as dangerous, as it offers a way of seeing the world history differently. As opposed to this,

for the American population *Grasshopper* offers a way of regaining a bit of their national identity, as Robert Childan sums up that it is a “[p]atriotic duty from the sound of it” (Dick 113). The difference between the American and German mentality is best exemplified by the conversation that Juliana and Joe have while travelling towards Abendsen. As Juliana reads the novel, Joe’s reaction to the story of the *Grasshopper* gives away his underlying fascist ideology. His view of the world betrays another form of inauthenticity, which represents Erich Fromm’s masochistic, masculine outlook of society. Joe’s world view is that of a soldier, where the individual is freed from ethical considerations when he follows the orders of his superiors. As opposed to this, Juliana is motivated by the search for truth about her world and that of the *Grasshopper*. Her eventual confrontation with Joe in hotel room in Denver is triggered by Joe’s attempt to control her, which in turn results in panic. In that instant her survival instincts kick in, and because of her martial arts training she manages to mortally wound Joe. Thus it can be said that Juliana is a kind of a repressed individual who abhors control of any kind. Perhaps she has suffered in the hands of powerful men like Joe in the past, and thus has decided to never to be used against her will again. Nevertheless, she is also the instigator of the end resolution of the novel, and the only character who seems to find balance and true authenticity at the end.

In section 3.2.2. I studied the connection of ethics and authenticity with regards to the character of Tagomi. His crisis ensues as he shoots and kills German commandos who attempt to Mr Baynes, a double agent there to warn the Japanese of a German attack. Being a Buddhist by faith, he is broken by the event of taking a life, and thus tries to reconcile by getting rid of the gun. Consequently he experiences a different world brought on by a piece of the Edfrank jewelry. In his vision he is what the world is like through the eyes of the Other, which results in his epiphany that can be summed up by the realization that we all have a unique point of view, and that one cannot understand how the Other experiences the world unless being put in his/her shoes. Moreover, his experience and consequent crisis shows that all humans are capable of evil, regardless of their

morality or ethical base, and that one cannot distinguish him/herself as good or bad until facing a crisis such as Tagomi's.

In the final section of the analysis I studied the concept of Tao and its representations in the novel in connection with the alternate histories and metafiction. I showed that the story of *MHC* can be understood as the interplay of the forces of yin and yang, of light and darkness. Moreover, the Taoist divining tool I Ching plays a considerable part in shaping the way the characters understand the world they inhabit. The I Ching's function in *MHC* is that it offers the characters who use it another way of interpreting reality and the history of their world. In addition, I Ching serves as a tie between the metafictional elements of the novel, as Dick himself used it much in the same way that Abendsen, the author of *Grasshopper* does. Moreover, this ties in with Tagomi's realization of the subjective nature of reality (or rather, realities), as the resolution of the novel seems to suggest that there are several parallel realities which are all equally true. While in the context of Dick's fiction they are actual, or "real" (as inappropriate as that word begins to feel), this can be understood as commentary on the nature of the postmodern society, where these are different textual realities that construct their own meaning in relation to other texts. In this context the individual must construct one's own meaning and identity, if one is to avoid the pitfalls of inauthentic existence.

In conclusion, *The Man in the High Castle* is complex text that comments on the position of the individual in a fragmented, postmodern reality. Whereas it asks many questions, it actually answers very few. Thus, the responsibility of answering them is left to the reader. This, I believe, is the point of Dick's novel: to show that the reality is subjective and relative, and that there is no one right way of understanding reality in the postmodern age. Since the 1960s, we have lived in many different textual realities simultaneously, and it is the responsibility of the individual to navigate them in a way that is beneficial to them. The various examples of inauthentic existence in the novel show that there are many ways of taking the easy way out, which is to say to relinquish one's freedom because of the heavy burden of responsibility for oneself and for others it requires. Indeed, the latter

becomes ever more important in a fragmented reality where dehumanization, totalitarianism and rampant consumerism are just some of the forces that redefine the value of human life and its meaning in their own textual context. During my research I had the impression that the study of authenticity in general has suffered a kind of a falling out in the 21st century, which is unfortunate. Its importance has hardly diminished in the past sixty years, as the multiplicity of voices in the modern society we live in grows daily. In this context the philosophical study of what it means to be a free, responsible individual becomes ever more important.

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